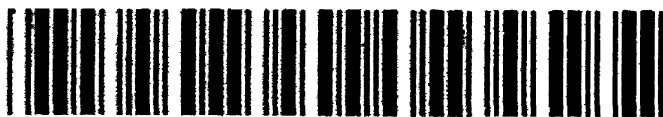


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TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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# EUROPE WESTERN ASIA AND NORTHERN AFRICA

- Lowlands below 600 feet
- Highlands above 600 feet
- Highest Regions and Arctic Regions
- Mountains
- Forests
- Marshes
- Deserts

Scale of Miles  
0 100 200 300 400 500 600





# MEDIAEVAL HISTORY

*EUROPE FROM THE FOURTH  
TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY*

BY

CARL STEPHENSON

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

*ILLUSTRATED*



HARPER & BROTHERS, *Publishers*  
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1935



MEDIÆVAL HISTORY

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F I R S T   E D I T I O N

Y

TO  
CHARLES HOMER HASKINS

Y



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## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

As a student primarily of what is called modern European history, the editor of this series has found himself more and more reluctant to capitalize and underline the word modern. He has never shared the idea that the only history worth while is that of the day before yesterday or since Watt patented a steam engine in 1769. With regret he has faced year after year the massed products of secondary schools whose growing numbers are in inverse ratio to what the secondary school history courses taught them of the beginnings of their own civilization and the origin of the economic, political and social institutions that shape their lives. The narrow view in the schools of what is significant in the evolution of western Europe forces the college teacher of modern history to explain the church, the beginnings of self-government, the rise of the middle class, the historic bases of democracy in education by the printed word, the origins of the scientific spirit and of the university they attend. Even such terms as Renaissance and Reformation are often words for something as vague to these young people fresh from high school as is the quantum theory.

I am therefore as a teacher of modern history and an editor glad to cooperate with a publishing house and with authors of known scholarship who make it possible for the college student and teacher to learn something of the historic heritage upon which this and coming generations must build what in time may be justly called modern history. This volume is my third opportunity and the justification of the volume may well rest upon what its author says in his concluding note. I commend it to student and teacher alike as prologue rather than epilogue.

But the justification would fail if Professor Stephenson had not preceded his conclusion by an exceptionally well-organized and clearly written text. He has steadily and sturdily kept as the core of his work the great historic and persisting institutions that take shape in the period we call mediæval. These he has clothed with an interest that prepares the student to understand the succeeding centuries. As a student and teacher I am happy to see this volume take its place beside the other sound and teach-



able volumes in this field in this and other series. They are a promising effort to give roots to a generation in danger of floating purposelessly like plankton in the shallow shoals of today.

GUY STANTON FORD

## PREFACE

THIS introductory sketch of mediæval history, being written primarily with a view to the needs of American college students, and being largely based on standard works, can have no very revolutionary subject matter. It will be found to differ from its predecessors in the field principally through its organization. By emphasizing chronological development, I have attempted to give a comprehensive view of European civilization stage by stage, in preference to a political narrative with a series of postscripts on other phases of life. That the volume is somewhat longer than many texts on the Middle Ages is mainly due to the insertion of additional illustrative material; anybody, I believe, learns more from one concrete example than from quantities of vague description. I have, furthermore, included a good deal that histories of Europe have sometimes omitted. I have given considerable attention—and yet it is inadequate—to the Moslems and their contributions to our culture. As England was an important part of the western world, I have seen no justification for excluding that country from the picture. And I have felt it desirable to summarize the complicated story of the Slavic peoples and their neighbors, if only for the sake of reference—that the beginner may realize how far from new the contemporary problems of eastern European politics really are. In teaching a subject that can be indefinitely extended on all sides, each instructor will naturally stress certain matters in preference to others. On the matters that are stressed he wants a text to be reasonably full; should he find more than he needs on the other topics, he can easily leave some of it out.

The various supplementary features of the book have been introduced as practical helps to the teacher and the student. The chapters have been broken into sections to display their content and to facilitate the making of assignments. Cross-references have been added to show connections that might otherwise be easily neglected. By excluding irrelevant details, the maps have been simplified to bring out particular facts of historical geography. The Suggested Readings are precisely that—not a bibliography for the scholar, but a few suggestions for the average student who may want to take a step beyond the text. The

choice of plates has not always been easy. A score of examples<sup>1</sup> usually came to mind when there was room for only one. In such cases the deciding factor has often been the character of the available photographs. The chronological charts at the end of the book will, I hope, be of service to the student in reviewing. In the text various countries and various aspects of culture have had to be separately treated. Here their development may be seen in cross-section. The years are so plotted that each page will give a visual impression of one century and its sequence of events. Mathematical accuracy should not, however, be expected. The author and the printer have merely done their best, within a very limited space, to indicate the proper relationships.

I have, first of all, to thank Dean Guy Stanton Ford for his reading of the entire manuscript. Through his criticism, based on a fine appreciation of historical balance and clarity, all of my chapters have been greatly improved; some of them have been reconstructed. I am also exceedingly grateful to my colleagues, Professors M. L. W. Laistner, Nathaniel Schmidt, G. L. Hamilton, G. H. Sabine, and E. A. J. Johnson, who have read portions of the book in proof and have given me the benefit of their specialized knowledge. Mr. H. H. King, Faculty Research Assistant in the Cornell University Library, has devoted weeks of painstaking labor to the verification of names, dates, titles of books, and other details throughout the whole volume. He has saved me from dozens of mistakes, big and little. Equal time and energy have been spent by my wife in the work of revising the manuscript and of compiling the index, which is infinitely better than it would have been if I had thrown it together myself at the last moment.

In this connection I should also like to thank the Mediæval Academy of America and numerous other publishers for permission to reproduce drawings or to quote from their editions of authors. Separate acknowledgments will be found in the footnotes. For most of my plates I am indebted to the Library of the College of Architecture, which has kindly allowed me unrestricted use of the Andrew D. White collection of photographs.

CARL STEPHENSON

Cornell University  
February, 1935.

MEDIAEVAL HISTORY



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This book seeks to defend no particular thesis with regard to the period that has become known as the Middle Ages. For reasons that will be seen in the opening chapters, the contrast between ancient and mediæval times can be readily appreciated, even though no precise line can be drawn to separate the two eras. At the other end of the narrative, however, no similar contrast appears. In the later fifteenth century there was no collapse of a world empire, with a characteristic civilization, to mark the close of one epoch and the beginning of another. The political and cultural diversity of Europe then continued without radical change; and so many peoples, states, institutions, and beliefs had emerged, either to flourish momentarily or to persist to our own day, that to embrace them all under one formula is quite impossible. Whether any of them, to the exclusion of others, can be designated as typically mediæval may be gravely doubted.

There is, in fact, no reason for trying to define the mediæval, except to establish a distinction from the modern—a project which has led to endless confusion. No such arbitrary procedure is here attempted. The outstanding developments of the dozen centuries that followed the reign of Diocletian are, in so far as they affected Europe, treated in order, and the reader is left to attach whatever labels he pleases. For the purposes of this historical sketch, they are considered mediæval simply because they came within a period called the Middle Ages.

Nor is any apology needed for presenting a view of just these centuries. That they have a vital connection with the life of the present will be obvious to any one with sufficient curiosity to study history at all. For many who are interested in the origins of modern European civilization they must hold a peculiar fascination, since in this respect they constitute the great formative period. And even if they had no direct bearing upon our own traditions, they would still possess the charm of the more primitive past. The most cold-blooded of scholars could not, if he would, take all the romance from the age when that term was first invented.

Every historian must break historical continuity at some point. Why it is convenient not to extend this narrative beyond the year 1500 will be indicated when the time comes to add another note by way of conclusion.



## CHAPTER I

### THE DECLINE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

#### I. THE WEAKENING OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

AT THE very outset of our study—and this is characteristic of historical investigation in general—we encounter an unsolved problem. We are confronted by the fact that the Roman Empire, after being a synonym of grandeur and stability for hundreds of years, disintegrated in the fifth century; and we cannot say with assurance just how it came about. All sorts of causes—political, economic, biological, psychological, and mystic—have been advanced for the fall of Rome; yet none of them has been accepted by scholars as altogether sufficient. Today, of course, it is no longer customary to consider the event a sudden catastrophe such as befell Humpty Dumpty, and to assign it a date. We realize that we have to do not merely with the pillaging of a city or with the end of a dynasty, but with the decay of a whole civilization; that the final crash of the Roman state had been long prepared by the rotting of its social fabric. No adequate consideration of so complex a problem can be attempted in these pages; all that is here contemplated is to show something of its magnitude and significance.

The problem of the "Fall of Rome"

To gain any idea of how the Roman Empire declined, we must first see how it grew; how Roman dominion, by the opening of the Christian era, came to extend throughout the Mediterranean world. Five centuries earlier, when Athens was at the height of its glory, Rome was but one of many little states in central Italy; the Romans but one division of the sturdy, practical, and as yet crude people known as Latins. Within another hundred years the Romans had absorbed the other Latin communities and had started a triumphant march into Etruria and Campania. Victorious wars of defense led to defensive alliances, and these imperceptibly to further wars and further alliances. By the end of another century Rome was in undisputed control of all Italy south of the Apennines. This success was by no means due solely to force of arms. From the outset the Romans had displayed a surpassing genius for political organization. Roman dominion had come throughout the peninsula to mean peace and

The growth of the Roman Republic



security, justice and toleration. Each Italian city, while recognizing the superior authority of Rome in some respects, remained autonomous in all else. Except as specified by solemn treaty, every community was free to govern itself and to develop its own native institutions. At no time did the Romans proclaim a dictatorship of language or religion or culture. On the contrary, it was from their Greek allies that the Romans first learned to appreciate the finer things in literature and art.

Contact with the cities of southern Italy introduced the Romans not only to the beauties of Hellenistic civilization, but also to the chronic rivalries of Hellenistic politics. Intervention in Sicily led to a bitter conflict with Carthage, and when that was ended, Carthage was no more. The Romans held all the western Mediterranean. Its islands and its shores, from the Po Valley and southern Gaul to Spain and northern Africa, were Roman provinces. And in the meantime, as Rome advanced from a small inland republic to a great maritime power, it was inevitably drawn into the troubled waters of the east. There, ever since the break-up of Alexander's empire, the three monarchies of Macedon, Syria, and Egypt had been accustomed to decide all questions with regard only to their own rival ambitions. The advent of a western upstart broke the established balance. When the Hellenistic states objected, they were crushed with amazing speed and thoroughness. By the end of the second century B.C., Macedon and Syria had gone the way of Carthage; and if the Ptolemies still ruled in Egypt, it was by virtue of a Roman protectorate.

The collapse of the senatorial government

Through this dramatic series of conquests—one of the most tremendous in all history—what we know as the Roman Empire actually came into existence. As yet, however, Rome was properly just the city on the Tiber, still governed by its ancient laws. The Roman sphere of dominion was a haphazard accretion of subject territories, allied states, and vassal kingdoms, administered by amateur generals and statesmen; for the Roman magistrate, whether at home or abroad, was essentially a gentleman elected for a term of years by his fellow citizens. The *imperium* (whence eventually our word empire) was the supreme authority of the republic, including civil, military, and religious functions, held by a group of officials rather than by one man. To be a Roman citizen was to belong to the privileged body of Italians who alone enjoyed full legal rights in the dominant city; but even

there all real power was restricted to the senatorial aristocracy—the few families who, by controlling the elections, named the magistrates and dictated their policies. For hundreds of years the senatorial government had functioned well, as the stupendous success of the republic bore witness; then with the closing century of the pre-Christian era came discredit and ruin. A constitution devised for a small city-state could not suffice for a world empire.

From the ensuing welter of domestic conflict emerged Julius Cæsar, whose patrician name was to become a glorious title of royalty for future generations. The completed conquest of Gaul won for him the devoted loyalty of the army; and this, combined with his championship of the popular cause and his skillful manipulation of political alliance, brought him ultimately to the life dictatorship, which was monarchy lacking only the regal crown. Perhaps Cæsar dreamed of establishing a permanent absolutism under which old distinctions would be ironed out and the entire Roman world would be subjected to one system of administration. But he was struck down in the prime of life by senatorial conspirators, and the definitive reorganization of the republic was left to his adopted son and heir, whom the world knows by his honorary name of Augustus. Whatever the motives that governed his action—and they are still a matter of dispute—Augustus preferred compromise to radical innovation. Refusing all titles that smacked of monarchy, he chose to be called simply the first man (*princeps*, prince) of the state; so his régime is commonly referred to as the principate.

The prin-  
cipate of  
Augustus  
(d. A.D. 14)

In theory the administration of Augustus made no sudden change with the past; the republic remained unaltered, except that it was now headed by one man—a principal magistrate and commander-in-chief chosen for life. The senate was retained, not merely as an order of supreme social honor, but as a governing council for the city of Rome and for those of the provinces that required no large body of troops. The highest officials, both civil and military, were normally landed aristocrats. For a while they were still elected by the ancient assemblies, which also voted formal laws; later these functions, in one way or another, came to be exercised by the senate and the prince. Although Roman citizenship thus lost much of its political significance, in other respects it continued to be a very valuable privilege. It brought the incalculable benefit of equal status under the Roman

law; it carried eligibility to the regular army and to other branches of the imperial service; and socially it was the more highly prized because Augustus opposed any lavish extension of the right into the provinces. By these fundamental considerations he was led to reject a policy of indefinite territorial expansion and to establish fixed boundaries with a reduced number of legions to guard them.

The extension of the municipal system

After his failure to secure the line of the Elbe, Augustus made the Rhine and the Danube his northern defense. To the east the Parthians were held along the upper Euphrates and the edge of the Arabian desert. In Africa the Sahara provided a natural frontier to the south. Within the limits thus drawn, construction of highways and of other public works was actively pushed; but an even greater accomplishment was the development of the municipal system. As rapidly as was practical, outlying territories were organized into city-states (*civitates*)—self-governing towns, each surrounded by an attached rural district. Throughout the east the Romans constructed their municipalities after Greek models, merely continuing the process of Hellenization begun by Alexander the Great. In the west, on the other hand, where the Roman dominion was extended over more backward countries, the urban plan, together with the civilization that accompanied it, was thoroughly Latin. By the time of Augustus, Sicily and Cisalpine Gaul (the Po Valley) had become in every way one with Italy proper; beyond them the shores of Transalpine Gaul, Spain, and Africa were dotted with flourishing Latin colonies and native communities that rivaled them in prosperity and culture. To advance this work of Romanization northward to the Danube and the Rhine, and southward to the Sahara, remained a chief objective of the principate.

The succession to the principate

To the Mediterranean world at large the prince who assured the blessings of the great Roman peace was lord and master. Under the compulsion of public opinion, he tended to absorb all central authority. His title of *imperator*, which earlier had been merely the designation of a victorious general, gradually came to have the force of "emperor." His statue replaced that of the goddess Roma as the symbol of the Roman sovereignty in countless local temples; for in those days, when every city was supposed to be a free community, religious veneration took the place of what we call patriotism or national feeling. To the unforgiving remnant of the old senatorial aristocracy, however, the prince

seemed no more than a tyrant. As the title passed from Augustus to unpopular members of his family, the ancient feud blazed up again, and various Cæsars wreaked their vengeance in bloody deeds which subsequent historians have delighted to dwell on at length. Their scandalous accounts are now being corrected by the study of more sober records, which reveal a smoothly running government controlled by experts, and millions of provincials thankful to it for the boon of an undisturbed life. To the idlers of the capital the follies and excesses of a degenerate Cæsar might be matters of supreme interest; to the empire as a whole they could mean extremely little.

In A.D. 68 occurred the death of Nero, the last of the Julian house. It then became apparent that the principate, while remaining an elective magistracy, had no regularly constituted electorate. The popular assemblies of the republic had been abolished; the senate, on which devolved the right of naming the prince, became more and more servile. A prince could follow the example of Augustus and designate his successor by the formality of adoption; on the failure of such action, however, who should determine the succession? The only source of real authority was the army, which had long enjoyed the vague privilege of proclaiming *imperatores*. The army was not a coherent unit capable of making a prompt decision. There were in actuality various armies, scattered in various provinces under various commanders, and in Rome itself was the prætorian guard. Thus, (within the year following Nero's death, each group of legions along the frontier vied with the guard in making and unmaking emperors. Ultimately the prize was won in battle by Vespasian, whose low birth—he was the son of a tax-gatherer—did not prevent his being an excellent general and administrator. Vespasian secured the purple for his two sons, Titus and Domitian, but the dynasty ended with the assassination of the latter in 96. Then followed nearly a hundred years of unbroken calm, during which the five "good emperors"—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius—reigned in succession; and of them the last four were all of provincial descent.

Thus the old aristocracy passed from control of the state; its passing showed not that the Roman nationality had been destroyed, but that it had been extended into the provinces. The true Rome was now the empire itself rather than the imperial city. First the Latins, then the Italians, and finally the westerners in

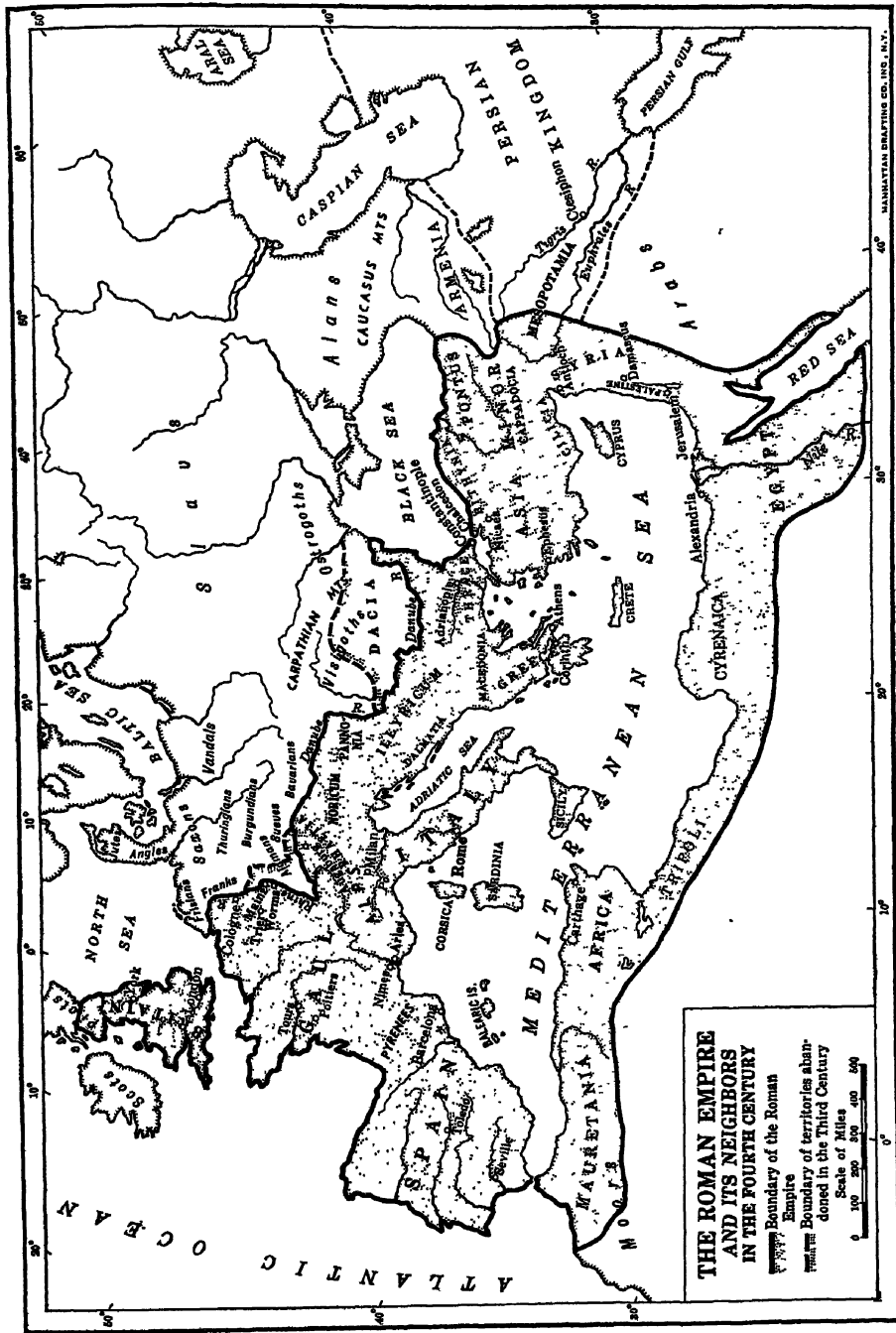
The  
"Good  
Em-  
perors"  
(96-108)

general had been assimilated by the dominant people. This is one of the outstanding facts in European history. A polyglot of races, inhabiting quite dissimilar regions, received an impress which the revolutionary changes of all subsequent centuries have not entirely obliterated. The result, it must be repeated, was attained without resort to coercive legislation. If the west became Latin, it was due to the persuasive force of example. The greatness of the Romans is preeminently attested by their power of disciplining the minds, as well as the bodies, of foreign millions.

The empire in the second century

On the whole, the Roman Empire of the second century, judged according to our best historical standards, was in a healthful condition. Its military system, especially to our modern eyes, seems a marvel of efficiency; for, without the mechanical aids of today, it kept an enormous expanse of territory in a peace that has since remained proverbial. Thanks to the virtually continuous efforts of the emperors, the frontiers had been greatly strengthened since the time of Augustus. Tremendous lines of fortification were thrown across wild regions where neither desert nor river afforded adequate protection, as in Asia Minor, in the newly acquired provinces of Britain and Dacia, and in Germany, to connect the Rhine and the Danube. Along the frontiers were distributed small fortresses (*castella*) held by permanent garrisons, and at wider intervals the great legionary camps (*castra*), which often attracted a considerable urban population. In the earlier period most of this construction was of earth and wood, but in the course of time masonry was substituted—of such massive strength that much of it has lasted even to our own day. And the magnificent paved highways, which linked the military outposts with the cities of the interior, were also destined far to outlast the state that had them laid.

Even better evidence of Roman vigor in the second century is provided by the ruins of countless towns that were then rising all over the west; for the policy of municipalization received active support from the successors of Augustus. It was, indeed, only natural that, as provincials came to occupy the throne, the attention of the government should more and more be concentrated on the welfare of the provinces. Hadrian, for example, is shown constantly traveling from one end of the Roman world to the other, supervising the improvement of its defenses, the erection of public works, and the planning of new urban developments. The founding of new cities and the growth of old ones testified to an



increase of population and marked a steady advance of the frontiers of civilization. With progress in material prosperity and in culture came extension of legal privilege. By the time of the Antonines, not merely the status of Italian ally, but full Roman rights, had been granted to scores of cities throughout the provinces. Roman citizenship and even the senatorial order were already becoming imperial in their scope.

The leveling of the empire

Thus, in spite of the many republican vestiges that remained embedded in the constitution, Rome by the second century was actually a world state controlled by an emperor. The experience of the past three hundred years had led to the gradual establishment of a monarchical system to insure peace and livelihood to the inhabitants of the empire. Such matters as imperial defense, finance, and the legal relations of men from different communities had come under one uniform administration. The personal household of the prince had developed into a far-reaching bureaucracy, in which the places earlier held by freedmen were now eagerly sought by members of the noble orders. With the extension of Roman rights, the governing aristocracy had ceased to be a narrow group of Italians and had become world-wide; had in fact become identified with the upper bourgeoisie of the provinces. The empire, as will be remembered, had from the outset been essentially a federation of autonomous city-states. It was no mere coincidence that the municipal system and the principate reached their height together.

The military despotism of the Severi (193-235)

The tranquillity of the second century, once broken, was never to return. One of its happiest features was the apparently easy solution that had been found to the problem of the imperial succession. A series of four princes, with the cordial support of the senate, had been able each to adopt and install a good man as Cæsar, the designated heir to the purple. Unfortunately, however, Marcus Aurelius insisted on giving the office to an unworthy son, Commodus; and the latter's assassination inaugurated another period of chaos. In 193, as in 68, the legions proved that theirs was the only substantial power; but this time the civil warfare was more prolonged and it had more disastrous results. Septimius Severus, an African, was proclaimed by the troops on the Danube and, having disposed of various rivals in battle, he proceeded to turn the state into an undisguised military despotism. The senate was terrorized into subservience and privileges were showered upon the army. The legionaries' pay

was raised; they were allowed to contract legal marriages and to enjoy domestic life outside the barracks. With increasing frequency common soldiers were commissioned as officers, and so launched on a career that might lead to the top of the imperial service.

Such measures, if the army had actually remained what it was in theory—a select group of Roman citizens—would have had no serious consequences. As a matter of fact, however, the legions had long tended, on the refusal of the urban classes to enlist, to be recruited mainly from the peasant population of the outlying provinces. Under Caracalla, son of Septimius, Roman citizenship ceased to imply much more than ordinary free status, and only a modicum of Latin or Greek culture. The policy of the Severi led straight to the barbarization of the government. Was that policy inspired by hatred of the ruling aristocracy or by failing confidence in its ability? Although other motives helped to dictate his attitude toward the senate, the victor of 193 undoubtedly regarded the whole political situation from the soldier's point of view. In his eyes the military needs of the state were paramount to all other considerations. And when we examine the events of the succeeding century, we find it hard to condemn such an opinion. The merit of an emperor strong enough to defend the frontiers, even if he was no gentleman, was soon to be appreciated to the full.

Once more, in 235, assassination ended a short-lived dynasty and invited a contest for the purple, in which, as it happened, none of the entrants was able to gain an unchallenged decision. While one emperor held the city of Rome, others dominated the provinces. During more than a score of years civil warfare was virtually continuous; and as the legions followed their champions to distant battlefields, the frontiers were left open to hordes of wandering barbarians. For the first time the Roman populace became familiar with tribal names that future centuries were to make increasingly formidable.<sup>1</sup> Alamans and Franks seized coveted lands along the Rhine and carried their pillaging raids far into Gaul. Goths broke into the Danubian provinces, slew an emperor who tried to stop them, and, taking to the sea, looted the classic cities of the Ægean. Meanwhile the Roman dominion in Asia threatened to collapse before the attack of a reconstituted

<sup>1</sup> On these barbarian peoples, see below, ch. iii.



Persian kingdom. The Persians were finally checked, but the victory was won by an adventurer of Palmyra, who eventually threw off all Roman allegiance to form an independent state in Syria.

Aurelian  
(270-275)

In the latter half of the third century the Roman Empire was thus faced with disintegration. Effective central authority had ceased to exist and the provinces were organized for local defense into shifting groups, each with its own ruler. Already we encounter a situation that was to become chronic in the mediæval period. To contemporaries, however, the present disorder appeared only a temporary evil, the prelude to a new era of stabilization. This work was begun by Aurelian, who rose from the ranks to be hailed as the Restorer of the Empire. In five short years he disposed of all rival princes west and east, destroyed the rebel city of Palmyra, and reestablished the frontier along the Rhine and the Danube, abandoning to the barbarians all land to the north and east of those rivers. Aurelian's murder by a petty conspirator was a calamity that threatened once more to plunge the world into chaos; fortunately another soldier-emperor was able to resume the unfinished task of reform and to devote his life to its completion.

Diocletian  
(284-305)

Of Diocletian's early life little is known except that he was born of a humble Dalmatian family and attained high honor in the army under Aurelian and his successors. In 284 he was proclaimed emperor by his troops and, being lucky enough to secure general recognition without a prolonged struggle, at once launched a program of imperial reorganization. Absolute monarchy, long since established in fact, was now formally proclaimed in law. The emperor was officially endowed with royal insignia and surrounded with the pomp of an oriental court. Social rank, as well as legal authority, henceforth depended solely on his favor. All officials, civil and military, were combined into an elaborate hierarchy with resonant titles to distinguish each grade from the next. The senate, deprived of all functions in the central government, became merely a municipal council for the city of Rome. Italy was reduced to the rank of a province. In fact, the whole empire was now treated as one territory, the inhabitants of which were all equally subject to the sovereign emperor.

Diocletian's system will in the main be recognized as an honest attempt to meet existing fact. The maintenance of political unity demanded a military despotism, and, through the subordi-

## THE DECLINE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD 13

nation of everything and everybody to that consideration, the state was made to hold together for another hundred years or so. Yet the evils that had conspired to produce that necessity were not cured; they continued to reappear in aggravated form. The only remedy that the government could think of was more military despotism. Already under Diocletian the bureaucracy was being extended downward to absorb all responsible authority, even in the cities. The age-old self-government of the Græco-Roman world was yielding to an official tyranny both oppressive and inefficient. A vicious cycle seemed to be at work: the helplessness of the municipalities had led to the application of force from above, and this in turn served merely to produce greater paralysis.

The end of  
the prin-  
cipate

The decrees of the later emperors thus betray a much graver deterioration than the passing of the semi-republican principate; they show that vitality had somehow gone out of the state. And if we compare the culture of the third and fourth centuries with that of the preceding age, the same fact is brought home to us even more convincingly.

### 2. THE DECAY OF CULTURE

As noted above, an outstanding fact for the history of civilization in the Mediterranean world is the distinction between the east and the west. In the former the influence of the Romans was necessarily restricted to such matters as law, government, and military organization; for the æsthetic and intellectual standards of the Hellenized countries persisted unchanged by political conquest. There Greek continued to be the language of education and culture. To be appreciated by urban society, books had to be written in Greek, ideas had to conform to the habits of Greek thought, works of art had to follow the Greek canons of good taste. Throughout the west, on the contrary, the extension of Roman dominion generally implied the Latinization of the inhabitants. Except in a few localities, as for example in Sicily, Greek was never more than a foreign tongue. Although Roman aristocrats commonly knew Greek, they learned it as a polite accomplishment, together with other refinements of the Hellenistic world. As the Roman gentleman remained a Roman at heart, so his culture, while incorporating many borrowings, remained distinctively Latin. In some fields the Greeks continued to

The Greek  
east and  
the Latin  
west

be supreme; in others the western genius made noteworthy contributions.

Roman art Throughout the realm of the fine arts the Romans were never able to acquire the Greek delicacy of touch or the Greek feeling for the beautiful. In sculpture their taste was generally satisfied with mediocre reproductions of classic models, and in the decoration of their great monuments they preferred the ornate and the grandiose to the simple and the restrained. The Romans, however, produced marvelous portrait statues—for example, those of the early emperors—and they were magnificent builders. In the designing of forts, aqueducts, amphitheatres, basilicas, and other utilitarian structures they excelled. Although the exquisite symmetry of a Parthenon lay beyond their talent, their development of the arch as a basic element in masonry construction would alone entitle them to distinguished rank in the history of the world's architecture.<sup>2</sup>

Latin literature To a certain degree, similar criticism will hold good of Roman literature. Latin verse generally lacked the spontaneity of the best Greek poetry. The Roman historians, as historians, were unquestionably inferior to the Greek. The Romans never learned the value of metaphysical speculation or developed enthusiasm for natural science. On the other hand, in the domain of politics and practical morality they set a standard that has never been surpassed. It is their dominant interest in the Roman character that links together such authors as Cicero, Cæsar, Sallust, Livy, Vergil, Horace, and Seneca. And in the second century the tradition was brilliantly maintained by Tacitus, Juvenal, and Pliny the Younger. Under the early principate Latin writings continued to possess not merely elegance of form, but vigor and originality.

The revival of Greek culture under the principate In the east, furthermore, this same period saw a noteworthy revival of Greek thought and letters. There it had long been the tendency of educated men to retreat from contemporary actuality and to become absorbed in the criticism of classic texts. Grammar and rhetoric were studied with passionate devotion; manuals, dictionaries, and other compilations were produced in great variety; while purely literary endeavor degenerated into stylistic imitation. Endless dispute persisted over problems of logic and metaphysics, but as yet no scholar emerged to show that many of Aristotle's most cherished abstractions were based

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 123 f.

on error. The master's own spirit of inquiry was forgotten and his pioneering work in biology and physics was left without a sequel. The mathematical sciences fared somewhat better. In the third and second centuries B.C., Euclid, Archimedes, Apollonius, Eratosthenes, and Hipparchus had firmly established the principles of geometry, trigonometry, mechanics, astronomy, and geography; and throughout the later period a host of students kept their zeal for these subjects. In medicine, likewise, though no single writer attained the distinction of Hippocrates, good progress, especially in anatomy, continued to be made. -

To some extent, possibly, the Roman conquest had had a deadening effect on the intellectual and æsthetic life of the Hellenized world, but in general the decline was unquestionably due to more deep-seated causes than a mere change of political masters. Since the days of Alexander the Great, classic Greece had suffered from chronic poverty and depopulation. Leadership in education and artistic activity had shifted from Athens and Corinth to the cities of Asia and Egypt, notably the more recent foundations of Antioch and Alexandria. Under Roman dominion those cities remained essentially as they had been before. Indeed, the principate brought appreciable improvement of conditions throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and it was presumably this improvement that was reflected in the renewed glory of Greek literature. Between the reigns of Domitian and Marcus Aurelius flourished Dio Chrysostom, rhetorician and moralist; Plutarch, author of the enormously popular *Lives*; Arrian, scholarly editor and historian; Lucian, whose satirical dialogues, pamphlets, and novels have proved him one of the world's most original writers. And in science we have during this same age the two illustrious names of Galen and Ptolemy.

The former, the author of books on an astonishing variety of subjects, is chiefly famous for those on medicine. Combining study of the classic authors with the results of his own experience, he produced the most comprehensive sketch of the science that had yet appeared. He discussed not only the use of drugs and other practical treatments, but also anatomy and physiology. Although much of his theorizing in the latter connection now seems extravagantly foolish, his conclusions were based on what was then thought to be sound authority. Ptolemy's books were similar works of great erudition, covering the whole field of mathematical astronomy and geography. By his development of the

Galen and  
Ptolemy

system earlier set forth by Hipparchus, he consecrated for the scholars of the next thousand years the concept of a geocentric universe—one, as was later to be demonstrated, of many mistaken ideas that he accepted. To our eyes, furthermore, his knowledge of geography was quite inadequate to support broad generalization. Yet in pure mathematics, especially in trigonometry, his work was a masterpiece of lucid exposition, well deserving its later renown.

Philosophy  
in the  
west reaches of speculative thought remained wholly foreign. Among the outstanding Latin writers, Lucretius (d. 55 B.C.) was the only one whose work was inspired by a deep love of philosophy in the Greek sense—that is to say, a rationalistic attempt to explain the working of the entire universe and man's place in it. Most of his compatriots, in so far as they had any philosophic interest, restricted their attention to the more practical sphere of ethics. For this reason they were attracted to Stoicism—a philosophy which, though originally based on metaphysical argument, had been popularized as the religion of the educated Roman. Almost every western author of that age betrays its influence, but it was given its noblest expression—most significantly—by the slave Epictetus and the emperor Marcus Aurelius.

Epictetus All things, says Epictetus, are of two sorts: those which are in our power and those which are not. Outside our power are worldly fame and fortune—wealth, office, family, even our own bodies. He who concentrates his devotion on such matters is truly the slave, for he is always at the behest of others. On the contrary, our reason is our own; its rational judgments are under no outside control. The man who steels himself to prize only what lies in his own will to be and to do is free, for he is beyond all hurt. "I must die. But must I die groaning? I must be imprisoned. But must I whine as well? I must suffer exile. Can any one hinder me from going with a smile, with a good courage, and at peace?" The tyrant orders me to tell a secret; I refuse, for that is in my power. He threatens to chain me. "What say you, fellow? Chain me? My leg you will chain—yes, but my will—no, not even Zeus can conquer that."<sup>3</sup>

Epictetus was a slave and a cripple, but he is quoted by the emperor Marcus Aurelius: "You are a little soul, burdened with

<sup>3</sup> *Discourses*, bk. i, ch. i.

a corpse." The man who ruled the Mediterranean world and was worshiped in provincial temples suffered from no delusions as to his real grandeur. "A spider is vastly proud of itself when it has caught a fly, one type of man when he has caught a tiny fish in a net, a third when he has speared a boar, a fourth when he has hunted down a bear, and a fifth when he has routed the Sarmatians."<sup>4</sup> "What poor creatures are these dwarfs of men, busied with their weighty matters of state and playing the philosopher to their own satisfaction!" "All things happen in accordance with universal nature, nor will the time be long ere thou, like Hadrian and Augustus, shalt be nothing, and thy place unknown." "Let it be thy hourly care to do stoutly what thy hand findeth to do, as becomes a man and a Roman, with carefulness, unaffected dignity, humanity, freedom, and justice."<sup>5</sup>

Marcus Aurelius

The keynote in the Stoic doctrine is will power, self-control through reason. This reason, which sometimes appears as conscience or soul, is the divine element implanted in man by God, creator and governing principle of the universe. And since all men, in this respect, have the same fundamental endowment, they are equally sons of God, and so brothers to one another. The parts assigned them in the world's drama may outwardly vary, but human character remains constant. If a man is true to his real self, he is true to Nature; he will then understand the divine order that governs all things and will ask no other reward. This lofty creed, with its heroic standard of conduct and its cosmopolitan spirit, so perfectly combined the traditions of the republic with the ideals of the empire that its popularity in the Roman world is readily understandable. Stoicism, however, could appeal only to educated men—to self-reliant men who had confidence in human capacity. In an age of mounting ignorance and despair it could not survive. Such an age was ushered in by the calamitous third century.

Fundamental principles of Stoicism

In the arts the deterioration that occurred during the period between Marcus Aurelius and Diocletian is no less than shocking. The fine series of imperial statues comes to a melancholy close; even the heads on the coins cease to be real portraits. Comparison of the great triumphal arches reveals the failure of all skill in the carving of relief. Such realistic panels as are found,

The decay of arts and letters

<sup>4</sup> A barbarian people whom Marcus Aurelius had trouble in defeating. See below, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> *Meditations*, iv, 41; x, 10; ix, 29; viii, 5; ii, 5.

for example, on the arch of Titus give way on that of Septimius Severus to crudely scratched designs. And when, a few generations later, Constantine erected his arch, he was reduced to filching his decorations from the monuments of his predecessors. Meanwhile, too, the princes strove to maintain the Roman tradition of magnificent building, but their structures were little more than piles of inferior masonry lacking all architectural beauty. The decline of Roman literature was even more abrupt. No historian arose to take the place of Tacitus, no poet to take that of Juvenal. Toward the end of the second century we encounter the names of Aulus Gellius, a collector of anecdotes, and of Apuleius, a collector of stories; after them ensues a blank. Virtually the only branch of Latin letters in which progress continued to be made was jurisprudence. The work of expounding the fundamental principles of the Roman law, and so of facilitating its application to the entire Mediterranean world, was not halted.<sup>6</sup>

The  
failure of  
philosophy

Through the influence of the jurists many ideas of the Stoics, particularly their doctrine of the natural law, came to be incorporated in the political and legal theory of the subsequent age. Otherwise that virile philosophy, from the third century onward, was supplanted by various forms of mysticism—an intellectual revolution that was to have momentous consequences for the development of European civilization. From the very outset Greek speculative thought had been chiefly remarkable for the fact that it discarded the authority of tradition and insisted upon the test of independent inquiry. Not infrequently, as we now realize, Greek scholars had tended to reason on the basis of insufficient data; had allowed imagination to outstrip observation. Nevertheless, the general validity of their method was amply demonstrated by the most brilliant advance in science that the world had yet seen. And although their schools of philosophy differed in the solutions offered to various problems, all believed in man's capacity to learn about himself and the universe through the normal human faculties. In contradistinction to the typical Greek thinker, the mystic has always been the man who despairs of these faculties. Truth, he holds, can be reached only by contemplation, by shutting oneself off from the world, and by communing with the infinite through the medium of the soul. Regarded from this point

<sup>6</sup> See below, pp. 118 f.

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of view, the acceptance of Neo-Platonism by the scholarly world was equivalent to a declaration of intellectual bankruptcy.

That system, supposedly a revival of Platonism, was in fact a pale reflection of what had been taught by the great Athenian. Plotinus (d. 270) divorced Plato's "idealism" from its original context and developed it, together with various non-Greek elements, to be the alleged quintessence of all philosophy and religion. The net result of his labor, however, was to demonstrate the ultimate futility of all thought, and so to preach the necessity, in the search for reality, of inner revelation through ecstatic vision. Thus the way was made clear for the acceptance of any creed with sufficient emotional appeal to captivate the imagination; for although the ideas of Plotinus might continue to hold the devotion of a select few, most men would prefer a faith that was not reduced to metaphysical abstraction. By this time many an oriental mystery had come to attract the learned as well as the illiterate.

Neo-  
Platonism

Since under the Roman dominion each city or tribe was normally free to worship whatever gods it chose, the possibility of religious variation throughout the empire at large became virtually infinite. As commerce or military service constantly brought men of all communities into contact with one another, the more popular cults were carried throughout the length and breadth of the Mediterranean world; so they came to reflect the prejudices and aspirations of its cosmopolitan society. Barbarous ritual was softened and elaborated to suit more refined tastes; crude mythology was explained in terms of Hellenistic philosophy to reveal its hidden significance. What had proved to be attractive features of one system were combined with others. By this process of gradual fusion, known as syncretism, the outstanding religions of the later empire all tended, despite a great variety of forms, to share the same fundamental elements.

The  
oriental  
mysteries  
in the  
empire

In an earlier age, presumably, the Romans had found spiritual exaltation in the worship of their ancient deities; yet long before the establishment of the principate, the official cult had ceased to be more than legal formalism. Educated men regarded the traditional stories of gods and goddesses—whether Greek or Latin—as sheer myth, and rejected all religious doctrine that could not be embraced under such a creed as Stoicism. On the other hand, the uneducated, to whom philosophy could offer slight consolation, naturally turned to the new faiths imported from the east. They offered what the legalistic ceremonial in the offi-



cial temples of Rome could not provide: the emotional appeal of a highly sensuous ritual, the certainty of truth mystically revealed, and the assurance to the purified initiate of life in a blessed hereafter. They demanded only what every man could give—faith. And to all alike they promised a reward more precious than wealth could buy. It is no wonder that, with the progressive ruin of state and society, they numbered their converts by the million.

Cybele,  
Isis, and  
Mithras

Eventually one of these oriental faiths was to gain supremacy throughout the Roman world, but for several centuries it had to strive against many rivals for popular favor. Earlier mysteries, such as those associated with Bacchus, god of wine, and Demeter, goddess of the harvest, celebrated the principle of fertility and, by depicting the return of vegetation to the earth, symbolized the initiate's entrance into a new spiritual existence. These elements, together with many others, were combined in the worship of the Phrygian Cybele, whom the west knew as Magna Mater. According to the sacred legend, she restored the slain Attis to life through the power of her love; and about this theme of death and resurrection was developed a cult that became widely influential under the principate. Meanwhile a similar myth concerning the resuscitation of Osiris by Isis, an Egyptian goddess, had been made the germ of another religion, remarkable for its hierarchy of priests, its elaborate liturgy, and its positive doctrine of immortality. A third popular mystery was that of Mithras, which originated in Persia and so was based on the sun-worship of that country. According to this system, known as Zoroastrianism, man's nature, like the universe, is the scene of perpetual conflict between the two gods of light and darkness, the forces of good and evil. The individual, to escape the realm of darkness after death, must hold to the light, must follow a strict code of morality. As aid in the struggle for righteousness, the cult of Mithras offered constant spiritual fortification. To gain admission to it, the candidate had to be purified through an elaborate ceremony. Thereafter he was said to be reborn.

Common  
religious  
develop-  
ments

By the third century, as already remarked, these mystic religions had borrowed much from one another. To all of them, for example, a sacrificial meal, in which the participant symbolically partook of the divine substance, had become a common feature. All, likewise, tended to absorb the ancient astrology

of the Babylonians, such as the lore connected with the signs of the zodiac and the division of time into periods of seven days, each named for a heavenly body or its presiding deity. Though some of these cults had originally been marked by license rather than by restraint, all came with the passage of time to emphasize ethical teaching, and each claimed to embody the essential truths of every sect. Through metaphysical interpretation, all gods were held to be but manifestations of one supreme power; what every popular religion offered was an intermediary by whose agency the individual might secure salvation. The Christian solution was but one of many offered; how it came to receive universal acceptance is a story of truly epic character.

According to the familiar account of the gospels, Jesus was born—while Augustus still ruled at Rome—in the Judean town of Bethlehem. Having been recognized by John the Baptist as the prophesied Christ, the Messiah of the Hebrews, He devoted His life to preaching the kingdom which God was about to restore to His people. But this kingdom, said Jesus, was not the earthly monarchy that the Jews had dreamed of reestablishing; it was a spiritual kingdom, to enter which a man must be born again in the spirit. Meticulous observance of the traditional law was of no avail; the outward act was less than the inward thought. In heaven the faith and love of a little child were of greater worth than all the learned holiness, all the sanctimonious piety in the world. Finally, because of His bitter attack upon sacred tradition and vested interest, Jesus was sent to death on the cross—a punishment commonly assigned to thieves and other disturbers of the peace.

The  
Christian  
religion

Then, as has so often happened, martyrdom served only to advertise an obscure cause. The small band of the faithful proclaimed that Christ had risen from the dead, and that, through His abiding spirit, they were able to perform all wondrous works. Their fervor rapidly made converts; and one of the latter was the apostle Paul, who has left us his dramatic story in his own vivid words. He never knew the man Jesus; the gospel which he preached was that of the risen Christ, seen by him in blinding glory on the road to Damascus. And as the result of this preaching, the Christianity that became famous under the Roman Empire was Pauline Christianity. Paul was able, thanks to his Greek education, so to present a religion built of essentially Jewish

elements that it could be understood throughout the Mediterranean world.

The superiority of Christianity

Detailed treatment of the Christian doctrine and of the organized Christian Church must be postponed for a succeeding chapter; but at this point it may be well to indicate a few general characteristics of Christianity as compared with its rivals. In the first place, the story of Jesus is compellingly beautiful—ininitely superior, as a mere story, to the theme of any other oriental mystery. This story is itself the expression of a religious idea, for it tells of a savior who died to redeem all men, and so needs no symbolic interpretation to make it intelligible. Christianity could thus incorporate the mystic elements of other creeds while avoiding their crude or revolting features. Furthermore, the ethical teachings of Jesus were of the very substance of His gospel, not a supplement borrowed from Greek philosophy. Christianity, as the event proved, appealed to all. It did not, like the cult of Mithras, exclude women; nor did it, like the cults of Cybele and Isis, exalt a feminine principle at the expense of others. Lastly, the Christian religion took over from Judaism its uncompromising monotheism. The world could never become Jewish in faith because the world would never become Jewish in nationality. Christianity, however, was launched as a religion for all peoples—a religion which declared every other to be false, a religion that was at once exclusive and aggressive. Therein lay the avowed hostility to the Roman state that was to invite persecution; yet therein lay also the strength that was ultimately to bring triumph.

### 3. THE PROBLEM OF CAUSES

Alleged causes of Roman decline

From the facts that have been noted, it is obvious that the advance of Christianity and the decline of the Roman Empire were intimately related. To say this, however, is not to affirm, as has been done, that the relation was one of cause to effect. General despair of human capacity to improve conditions on earth was perhaps a contributing factor in the final ruin of the state; but would men despair of improvement before conditions had become desperate? Neither Christianity nor any other form of spiritual consolation can be blamed for the evils which they helped men to forget. Besides, the rising flood of mysticism under the later empire was only one phase of an oriental reaction which may likewise be detected in arts and institutions. This

reaction was prepared for by the weakening of Hellenism. In the west, as already remarked, the decay of culture, from the third century on, was even more tragic; and the ensuing reaction, since there was no older civilization to reassert itself, was necessarily toward barbarism. The time-honored allegation that the barbarian invasions caused the fall of Rome is thus seen to be entirely illogical. The process of barbarization was well under way long before the collapse of the frontier defenses permitted inroads by the tribes from beyond them, and was due, not to the infiltration of uncivilized peoples, but to the failure of the Romans to assimilate them. What was the reason for this failure?

The problem, it has been said, is essentially one of biology. If we could be entirely sure that the Roman Empire was based on the superiority of a Latin race, which was gradually corrupted by intermixture with inferior races, our inquiry would be satisfactorily closed. Unfortunately, we have little evidence to warrant such a conclusion. The Latins were in truth a superior people. But who were the Latins? As far as we know, they were never a biologically pure stock. The Latinization of the west cannot be explained in terms of heredity, because the bulk of the westerners were never descended from Latins. And that the barbarian peoples of Europe were also endowed with great native ability was to be convincingly demonstrated in the subsequent age. The fault clearly lay—to employ a crude metaphor—not in the raw material, but in the finishing process. The deterioration of Rome, we must conclude, was due to the weakening of forces that had earlier helped to make it great. What were these forces, and why did they weaken?

All sorts of answers have been given to the question. Countless sermons have pointed to Rome as a horrid proof of the text that the wages of sin is death. Learned writers have attributed the fate of the empire to such diverse factors as slavery, bad taxation, princely ambition, the exhaustion of the soil, or the lack of applied science. To repeat the arguments that have been marshaled against these and similar contentions is impossible in a brief review of the subject. Suffice it to say that they have been shown to be untrue or inadequate. One point, however, has become increasingly plain. The more Roman history has been discussed, the more it has been found to turn upon the fortune of the city-state. In that institution the political and cultural life

The significance of the city-state

of the Mediterranean world was concentrated. While the municipal system flourished, the empire flourished; when one weakened, the other weakened.

Economic  
distress in  
the third  
century

The first symptoms of the economic distress that was later to become general thus appeared in the cities under Marcus Aurelius. The emperor, in response to their appeals, sent special agents to supervise the local administration; but the situation failed to improve. During the third century troubles rapidly accumulated. To the ravages of civil war were added those of pestilence. The population declined and the loss was never made up. Lands ceased to be cultivated; urban properties stood vacant; taxes remained unpaid. The state was faced with bankruptcy, and the non-productive regions, like Italy, with starvation. To secure cash, the government debased the coinage, and this served merely to drive all good money out of circulation. The poverty of the masses deepened and became chronic. The result was a frantic effort on the part of such emperors as Aurelian and Diocletian to check the encroaching tide of ruin. As local initiative failed, force was applied from above; and when civil authority broke down, the military was called in. The imperial federation of self-governing commonwealths degenerated into a despotism of the old oriental type, supported by a corrupt and rapacious bureaucracy.

The  
growth  
of a caste  
system

A prominent feature of this degeneration was the establishment of what amounted to a rigid system of castes. Many factors helped to bring about the policy—especially the financial crisis of the third century. Diocletian was able to restore the coinage, but not the wealth of the people. Cash remained so scarce that the state had to collect most of its taxes in kind. As a consequence, its employees were in turn compelled to accept produce for at least part of what was owed them. Even land was used for paying wages—as, for example, those of the troops. Soldiers already had been given a privileged status, had been permitted to marry and to have their own homes. Being now provided with fields from which to gain a livelihood, they came to constitute an agrarian, as well as a military, class. And this system naturally enhanced a tendency already noted—the dominance of the army by peasants, especially by barbarians, who were always willing to accept land in return for service.

Meanwhile, the state's financial difficulties had also led it to extend the ancient system of requisitioning men, animals, con-

veyances, and materials. Although it could be justified as Trade and  
 exempting the victim from an equivalent tax, such a practice, industry  
 when placed at the discretion of unscrupulous subordinates, inevitably led to the further burdening of an already overburdened people. This particular scourge fell mainly on the peasantry, but the merchant and the artisan were by no means free of similar oppression. For a long time the trades regarded as essential to the state had been organized under highly privileged associations called *collegia*. Among them were, for instance, the millers, bakers, and others who helped to supply the capital with food; the carpenters and masons who constructed public buildings; the craftsmen who furnished arms for the legions; and the men who transported all these things by sea or land. As times grew worse and public credit became insecure, business men naturally hesitated to undertake contracts that meant certain loss. So edicts were issued to compel the performance of the customary duties, and finally to prohibit the member of a *collegium* from quitting his position, or his heirs from refusing the same responsibility. Every trade and every profession, by the extension of this iniquitous system, thus tended to become a hereditary servitude, and all prospect of commercial revival through private initiative was utterly destroyed.

Equally significant developments took place in connection with agriculture, which had always been of greater economic importance to the Roman world than industry. According to Diocletian's fiscal reorganization, each assessment district was made liable for a certain quota of land-tax units, based upon the productivity of the soil and the number of its inhabitants. The arrangement, it is true, was not supposed to be immutable, but the tendency was henceforth to avoid reapportionment and to place each territory under a fixed charge. And since the land was worthless without cultivators, they too had to be converted into stable assets. Under the republic a good many estates had been worked by slave labor; the establishment of world-wide peace ended the supply of cheap slaves and made such a method of agricultural exploitation generally unprofitable. Cash was lacking for the employment of hired labor; so the proprietor had to settle his lands with peasants who would perform all necessary work in return for plots assigned to each. Such a tenant was called a *colonus*. Usually he was a freeman; holding by lease for an unlimited period. Then, to assure the payment of the

assessed tax, the state forbade him to leave. He and his children after him became attached to the soil, to be bought and sold along with it.

The degradation  
of the  
urban aristocracy

Even a more bitter fate befell the aristocracy of the provincial cities. Throughout the prosperous age of the empire, each of them was governed by its own municipal council, which, like the senate of the capital, installed the magistrates and supervised their administration. And as at Rome the senatorial order remained the highest social honor, so in each locality the distinction of being a *curialis* (i.e., one eligible to the urban *curia*) was eagerly sought. Since admission to the charmed circle was principally a matter of high property qualification, a man of any rank in life, even a freed slave, could found an aristocratic family by the simple expedient of amassing a fortune. To live as a gentleman, he would have to possess landed estates, and part of his time would be spent on some villa in the country; but his chief residence would be his house in town, and there likewise would lie his political career. To obtain the dignity of public office, he would gladly spend huge sums on the building of temples, baths, amphitheatres, or other works that might be needed.

This, as we know from hundreds of inscriptions, was still the normal system in the second century. Two hundred years later how appallingly different was the situation! What was once a prized distinction had become a sort of official slavery. The hereditary rank of *curialis* carried with it responsibility for taxes assessed within the territory of the city. Collection constantly fell off; the mounting deficit had to be met by the unfortunate dignitary. The law forbade him to resign his wretched honor; if in despair he ran away, he might, like a fugitive *colonus*, be captured and brought back. He was actually worse off than the *colonus*, for the latter was at least assured of a permanent living for his family. The only fortunate man in all this miserable company was the great landlord who, through imperial favor, attained the senatorial order and so escaped the baneful liability for municipal office. Leaving the town to its evil destiny, he retired to a fortified estate in the country. There, supported by his peasants and protected by his retainers, he defied the tyranny of bureaucrats and spent his days in the society of friends like himself.

The culmination of all these unhappy developments was the ruin, in all but exceptional regions, of urban life and culture.

## THE DECLINE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD 27

Through the multiplication of cities, the frontiers of civilization had for hundreds of years steadily advanced; through the influence of the cities, the east had tended to become Greek and the west to become Latin. To make these results possible, there had been a constant increase in the ranks of the urban aristocracy, the affluent and educated bourgeoisie of the empire. Behind that class lagged the poor of the cities and the semi-barbarous peasantry of the countryside. Yet it was from the lower classes that the aristocracy was constantly recruited; the progress of one carried with it the progress of the others. As the reverse process set in during the third century, it naturally brought a relapse toward more primitive conditions, those which we recognize as mediæval.

The ruin  
of the  
towns

It would therefore appear that, if we could diagnose the malady that came to afflict the towns, we should have a satisfactory explanation for the collapse of the empire and its culture. And in the light of what we know of such phenomena in other ages of history, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the problem is essentially economic; for in general the prosperity of the towns must have been an economic prosperity. There is, indeed, much that remains doubtful in the history of the Roman cities and it would be wrong to make absolute generalizations about all of them. The *civitas* was not merely a city in our sense of the word, but a territorial state organized about an urban center. The growth of the latter may thus in part be attributed to its importance as administrative headquarters of a district. It is also certain that very few of the ancient cities, especially in the west, were to any significant degree industrial settlements. Granting all this, however, can we doubt that the enormous wealth, which we find concentrated in the urban aristocracy of the second century, was principally gained through trade? If this conclusion is accepted—as it has been by many authorities—we are apparently forced to believe that the very complex series of events, popularly known as the fall of Rome, was intimately connected with the failure of commerce.

It is surely a remarkable fact that the illustrious cities of Greece rose and fell with the growth and decline of their commerce. That as commerce was shifted in the Hellenistic age to new centers, population, wealth, and leadership in culture went with it; and that subsequently, in so far as ancient civilization persisted, it did so in precisely those regions where ancient commerce re-

The  
failure of  
commerce



mained least disturbed. The impoverishment of the western provinces was anticipated by that of classic Greece. The former, it is true, were blessed with a more fertile soil, but this did not save them from disaster. With the predominance of agriculture, they entered the Dark Age of their history; their modern greatness began only with a subsequent revival of trade.

There is still the question, Why did commerce fail? To that it must be frankly admitted that we have no definitive answer. We may say without fear of contradiction that commerce failed because people became too poor to buy. But whether we affirm that poverty increased or that wealth declined, we leave the fundamental mystery as it was. And as long as our foremost experts of today, with all the exact information at their disposal, fail to tell us just what produced the recent depression, how can we expect to be entirely sure of what happened to a state that disintegrated fifteen hundred years ago? Fortunately, the historian is not required to devise formulæ in terms of final causes. Our inquiry has been pushed far enough to make the beginning of the mediæval period reasonably intelligible; so, without further attention to what has become a classic riddle, we may proceed to consider the more obvious developments of the ensuing age.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD AND THE NEW IN MEDIÆVAL EUROPE

#### I. LATE ROMAN INSTITUTIONS

AT THE close of the third century Diocletian, as we have seen, inaugurated a series of reforms, thereby hoping to correct the evils that had so nearly brought the Roman Empire to dissolution. One chronic source of trouble had been the succession to the purple; and it would appear that some of Diocletian's measures, though individually of no very revolutionary character, were intended to provide a solution of the problem. For a long time the emperor had normally borne the title of Augustus, and his designated successor that of Cæsar. Not infrequently, too, an Augustus, with excellent precedent behind him, had elevated a Cæsar to supreme authority during his own lifetime; for Roman tradition had always favored a system of magistracies each held by two or more persons at the same time. The consuls, for instance, actually shared one office, apportioning its functions according to custom or to suit their own convenience. When, therefore, Diocletian associated with himself Maximian, to act as Augustus in the east, no one could imagine that anything but the administration had been divided. Experience had proved that the task of ruling the empire was too vast for one man, and the contrast between the Greek and Latin halves suggested a natural line of demarcation. Nor, when each Augustus then named a Cæsar to be his subordinate, and eventually to succeed him, could any innovation be suspected.

Diocle-  
tian's plan  
for the  
succession

To what extent Diocletian himself regarded his plan as a permanent arrangement remains doubtful. Under his guiding genius, at any rate, it worked smoothly. In 305 the aged emperor not only abdicated his own office, but also induced Maximian to follow his example. Their authority then passed to the two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius, for whom in turn subordinates were named. But at this point the system broke down. Cæsars refused to be satisfied with inferior rank; sons of emperors defied settlements that excluded them from the succession; armies still intervened to place their favorites on the

throne. It was thus by the old-fashioned method of sheer force that Constantine, son of Constantius, began his illustrious career.

Constantine  
(306-37)

In 306, on the death of his father, Constantine was proclaimed by the legions in Britain—as one of six rival emperors. By 312 death had reduced the number to four: Constantine and Maxentius in the west, Licinius and Maximinus in the east. An alliance between Constantine and Licinius then allowed each to dispose of his own particular enemy, and for about ten years the two victors shared the Roman world between them. In 324, however, the civil war was revived. Licinius was crushed in a decisive campaign and Constantine was left to do as he pleased with the entire empire. He chose to keep it all for himself and, as if it were a family estate, ultimately divided it among his three sons. So ended Diocletian's attempt, such as it was, to solve the problem of the succession. In his attitude toward the Christians, which will be separately treated below, Constantine also reversed the policy of Diocletian; in all other principal aspects he maintained it.

Civil  
adminis-  
tration

Supplemented by various measures of Constantine and his sons, Diocletian's administrative system henceforth continued to be the basis of the imperial government, and as such was taken over by the barbarian states of the west. Much of it was obviously inspired by a dread of local dictators. Except in a few frontier districts, civil magistrates were stripped of military power and combined in an elaborate hierarchy extending upward to the emperor. The provinces, now much smaller than they had once been, were grouped in thirteen dioceses, each under a vicar; the dioceses in four prefectures, each under a prefect. The heads of all these administrative districts were appointed by the emperor, were shifted about at his pleasure, and were held directly responsible to him. Special agents (*agentes in rebus*) were constantly employed in the provinces to supervise the administration of the post roads, investigate complaints, spy on local magistrates, and make reports to the central government. Their immediate superior in the capital was the master of offices, who also acted as superintendent of the four great secretarial bureaus. The head of the legal department, responsible for the drafting of laws and the supervision of the whole judicial system, was the quæstor of the sacred palace. The chief officer of the imperial household, who tended to absorb various extraordinary powers, was the provost of the sacred bedchamber, a sort of grand cham-

berlain. Two men, in one way or another, controlled finance: the count of the private estates and the count of the sacred largesses. These ministers, together with the prætorian prefect and other high officials who might be present, made up the *consistorium*, or advisory council of the emperor.

On the military side of the state service a similar hierarchy of officers was gradually created. Subordinate only to the emperor were the masters of horse and masters of foot—exalted persons who, except in the case of actual hostilities, were likely to be seen in attendance at the imperial court. Throughout the provinces the actual command of the armies was in the hands of generals called *duces* (dukes), and below them, of course, was a series of divisional commanders and lower officers bearing a variety of titles. This, as was to be proved repeatedly, was the ladder of preferment leading to the imperial throne itself. In spite of the occasional elevation of a son by his father, tradition had it that the emperor should himself be a soldier, and in the long run the army always controlled the succession.

Military  
admin-  
istration

Under the principate the man at the head of the Roman state had been merely a chief executive of the republic, but that concept had faded in the third century. The later Roman emperor officially wore the royal crown and other trappings of oriental monarchy. His person and all that belonged to him were sacred. Before him his subjects knelt as suppliants to a god and were honored to kiss the hem of his purple robe. In Latin he was known as *dominus*, lord; in Greek as *basileus*, king. He was the source of all political power and all social distinction. He was the fountain of justice. His edicts, expressing his individual will, were formal acts of legislation, the laws by which the state was governed. Under such a glittering autocracy it was natural that every man's individual glory should depend upon his nearness to the refulgent throne. Official documents of the late empire reveal service of the state, both civil and military, inextricably combined with service of the emperor's person, and all servants meticulously graded according to their precedence at court and the corresponding titles of honor. Members of the imperial family and a few other grand personages could alone be termed *nobilissimi* (most noble). The prætorian prefects, the masters of horse and of foot, the master of offices, and the other high ministers who attended the *consistorium* had the right to be called *illustres* (illustrious). The immediate subordinates of

The  
emperor  
and his  
court

these officials, such as the vicars and the heads of administrative departments, together with the governors of the more important provinces and the *duces* of the army, were described as *spectabiles* (admirable). Members of the senatorial order, lesser provincial governors, and their military peers were *clarissimi* (most distinguished), while local functionaries and the like were only *perfectissimi* (most perfect).

By the fourth century all the honorable distinctions of the republic thus tended to be converted into marks of imperial favor. The equestrian order disappeared; the senatorial order became only a decoration. The designation of patrician (*patricius*) was likewise given, without any implication of political authority, to a very select few, who were then addressed by the emperor as his "parents." Another title which tended to increase in prominence was that of count. Literally the *comes* was the companion of the emperor, the "friend of Cæsar"; but what had at first been a sort of informal flattery had become official by the time of Constantine. The intimate circle about the prince were still counts; so were the members of his council and the high dignitaries of the palace. The two counts who controlled finance have already been noted. There were many others, such as the count of the sacred vestment (chief of the wardrobe) and the count of the stable (constable). Eventually the style that betokened the successful courtier was extended into the provinces, for administrators and generals were alike proud to achieve the companionship of the prince.

Fiscal  
privilege  
and  
ation

These high-sounding titles, furthermore, were not without practical value. All the "illustrious," "admirable," "distinguished," and "perfect" gentlemen, together with their innumerable underlings, were normally exempt from the ordinary state charges. The services which they rendered to the emperor were held to free them from more ignoble burdens; and although each privileged group had characteristic obligations, they were not oppressive. The *clarissimi* of the senatorial order, for example, made an occasional "offering" of gold to the emperor and were theoretically liable for the expensive luxury of the consulship or prætorship at Rome, but they were blessedly released from all municipal honors and from the more oppressive taxes. Besides, their social rank tended to make them immune from the tyranny of rapacious officials. The maintenance of the court and the

bureaucracy, however essential it may have been to the empire, thus placed a crushing load on the productive masses.

In the main, of course, the state had to be supported from the great taxes which, by the fourth century, had become virtually uniform throughout the empire. The indirect taxes were of various kinds. Duties were collected not only on imports and exports at the imperial frontier, but also on goods carried across certain interior lines or beyond certain points on sea or river. On every highroad and waterway the trader encountered toll stations where various articles were taxed at regular rates. In addition, each city had the right of charging duties on articles brought for sale within its limits, and the profits went toward the expense of the urban government. While trade flourished, none of these indirect taxes could be thought excessive; as times became hard, the state increased its demands, exacting a percentage of the city tolls and laying special imposts on every organized trade and profession. And the less the revenue which could be got from commerce, the greater that which had to be taken from agriculture.

Under the early empire a great variety of dues were collected from the rural classes, and some of them persisted into the later period. We continue to hear, in some provinces, of a tribute (*tributum*) from the land and a poll tax (*capitatio*) from the peasants. The heaviest fiscal burden, however, was that of the *annona*, Diocletian's great tax in kind. For this purpose every district, in proportion to the fertility of the soil and the number of the inhabitants, was assessed in units called *iugera* (yokes) and *capita* (heads). The produce—grain, wine, oil, meat, etc.—was collected by state employees and gathered in central warehouses, whence it was distributed to the troops and other consumers. Every five years there was supposed to be a reapportionment; but since it was easier to juggle the figures than to carry out a thorough survey, the assessed valuations tended to become more and more arbitrary, and so to bear harder on the unprivileged.

The social results of failing trade and oppressive taxation have already been noted in the preceding chapter. The decay of the urban system—marked by depopulation, impoverishment, and the ruin of the curial class—continued unchecked. The west, especially, tended to become predominantly agrarian. Lesser men, either peasant proprietors or landless fugitives from the cities,

The great  
estates

found it more and more necessary to secure the protection of the wealthy and powerful. The landed noble became *patronus* for an increasing host of economic dependents who tilled his fields, served in his household, and—despite the law—acted as his armed retainers. With the progressive weakening of the local administration, the imperial government was forced to recognize the political strength of the great estate. The landlord was made responsible for the public obligations of his tenants and clients. He levied their taxes, compelled them to repair the roads and perform other duties to the state, tried them for petty misdeeds and collected their fines. In such matters the magnate was, of course, the mere agent of the government; but if the latter became too weak to enforce its claim to the proceeds, would the great man forgo his exactions?

Changes  
in the  
army

During the fourth century, probably, no one thought of this possibility; thanks to the army, the emperor was yet strong. In fact, the military was the one department of state in which men like Diocletian and Constantine could be expected to show the greatest efficiency. In this connection, as in others, precise information concerning the imperial reforms is unfortunately lacking; but we can be sure that the age witnessed developments of outstanding importance for the future. As remarked above, the legions posted along the frontiers had by this time been turned into a privileged class of resident landowners, lacking all mobility. To make up for this obvious defect, Diocletian created a new field army which could be kept wherever the emperor pleased. Both forces now included separate units of horse and foot, for the day of the infantry legion, with cavalry used only as a subsidiary arm, had definitely passed. And as time went on, the mailed horseman acquired ever enhanced prominence, until the army became almost exclusively a mounted body.

Another significant tendency in the military organization of the fourth century was the greatly extended employment of barbarians. The fact that the sons of legionaries were compelled by law to follow their fathers' profession shows that the government was suffering from a shortage of men even in this privileged career. The task of holding the frontiers was indeed tremendous. Aurelian's abandonment of Dacia and the triangle between the Rhine and the Danube had not shortened the lines of defense and, for reasons that will be seen below, the pressure of the outlying nations was unrelenting. Diocletian's military ar-

## OLD AND NEW IN MEDIÆVAL EUROPE 35

rangements called for a total force of possibly half a million men; if enough Romans could not be found, the emperors had to hire barbarians. So, in one way or another, streams of Moors in Africa, of Arabs in Syria, and of Germans in Europe entered the imperial service. The auxiliary divisions had from the earliest time been non-Roman; by the fourth century even the "citizens" in the legions were such as Augustus would never have recognized. Besides, through extension of another ancient precedent, whole tribes had been admitted to the empire as allies (*fœderati*) and assigned lands in return for their engagement to patrol a section of the frontier. Ever since the days of Marcus Aurelius, such arrangements had come to be increasingly common; they were now to introduce a series of famous tragedies in the history of the later empire.

The troubles of the third century also produced noteworthy innovations in military fortification. Under the early principate, the frontiers had come to be protected by elaborate works in earth and masonry. Although the latter had been constantly strengthened by the succeeding emperors, experience had proved that they were not always stoutly held. Once through the barrier, marauding hordes had found the provinces lying defenseless before them. As a consequence, Aurelian decided to fortify the capital, and soon every important city was encircled with stone walls. This practice, incidentally, gives us definite information concerning the relative size of urban areas under the late empire, for in most cases the line of the ancient walls is still clearly traceable. Thus we know that Aurelian's fortification at Rome enclosed only a little more than 3000 acres, and that Rome was by all odds the largest city of the Mediterranean world. Alexandria, the metropolis of the east, contained somewhat over 2000 acres. But none of the provincial towns of the west extended beyond 1000 acres. Trier, the greatest city on the Rhine, covered 704 acres; Nîmes, the greatest city of southern Gaul, 790; London, the greatest city of Britain, 330. And these places were quite exceptional. Throughout Gaul, for example, most cities contained less than 75 acres; many less than 50.<sup>1</sup>

Military  
fortifica-  
tion

The significance of these figures will be appreciated when it is noted that the legionary fortress, constructed to accommodate five or six thousand men, normally covered about 50 acres—

The cities  
of the late  
empire

<sup>1</sup> There are 640 acres in a square mile; a plot measuring half a mile on each side contains 160 acres.



much the same ratio that we find in a densely populated town of today. The Roman city, however, was primarily residential, rather than industrial. So we have to consider half a million inhabitants the maximum for the capital, and estimate the other cities with proportionately less. Judged by the standard of the western provinces, London, with perhaps 25,000, was a huge town, certainly five times as big as the average. Another very exceptional city of the late empire was Constantinople; to understand how it came to be founded, we must consider the rise of the Christian Church.

## 2. CHRISTIANITY

The  
Roman  
attitude  
toward  
religion

The concept of a church distinct from the state was originally foreign to Roman thought. Under the constitution of the principate, as of the republic, one set of magistrates held all political functions—civil, military, and religious. Any man legally elected was considered competent to ascertain the will of the gods by formal methods of divination or to preside over the public ceremonial of worship; no especially sanctified priesthood was necessary. And as long as the Roman citizen outwardly submitted to the official deities, he was free to believe anything that he pleased. Citizens of other communities were permitted to maintain any faith that did not conflict with the general peace of the empire; but, as a sign of their proper reverence for the dominant state, they were commonly required to recognize by solemn act the cult of its living embodiment, Augustus—a formality as ordinary to that age as an oath of allegiance to ours.

Polytheism  
and  
Judaism

Such requirements, in a polytheistic world, could be expected to offend nobody. The believer would willingly admit one more god to the Pantheon; the skeptic would regard an additional ceremony as a matter of no consequence; even the devotee of an oriental mystery, while preferring one manifestation of divine truth, would normally concede that there might be many others. In this polytheistic world the Jew was an exception. To him all faiths save his own were sheer idolatry, an abomination in the sight of the Lord; he would never conform to the official system of Rome. But since the Jewish religion, with its strict observance of a peculiar law, could never be popular enough to be dangerous, the Romans, after considerable trouble, wisely accepted it as a national institution and exempted its followers from emperor-worship. Even after the destruction of the Jewish state by Titus

(A.D. 70) and the consequent dispersion of the Jews throughout the provinces, their religious beliefs and practices were still tolerated.

To the Christians no such liberty was extended. Although the Roman government seems for a time to have considered Christianity a mere sect of Judaism, by the close of the first century the distinction between the two had become eminently clear. Most of the Jews would have nothing to do with the new faith, which, on the other hand, had spread rapidly through the Gentile population. The Christians held that they had been freed from the Hebrew law and, to emphasize the fact, celebrated the first day of the week in place of the Jewish sabbath. Yet in their monotheism they remained as intolerant of all other creeds as the Jews. In Roman eyes, consequently, the Christians were no better than seditious conspirators. Their associations were declared illegal; to be a Christian was to commit a crime. Thus it came about that the Christians were persecuted, not merely by such tyrants as Nero and Domitian, but also by the very best of the emperors. Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, in so far as they conscientiously tried to enforce the law, were necessarily hostile to those proscribed by it.

The early  
Christian  
persecu-  
tions

One of our earliest and best sources on the Christian persecutions is the letter written to Trajan by Pliny the Younger, then governor of Bithynia.<sup>2</sup> He reported that he had discharged all suspects who made offerings of wine and incense to the statue of the emperor. Those who refused he had handed over to execution.

They affirmed, however, that this was the sum total of their guilt or error. On a certain day they would meet before dawn and sing in alternate verses a song to Christ as a god. They would bind themselves by oath, not for the sake of criminal acts, but as an engagement not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not to break faith and not to refuse the surrender of a pledge when it was demanded. It was their habit then to disperse, although they reassembled later in order to partake of food.

Trajan replied that Pliny had acted very properly. The governor should not himself undertake to ferret out these people, nor should he listen to anonymous accusations. But when Chris-

<sup>2</sup> Pliny, *Letters*, x. 96 (97).

tians were regularly denounced and found guilty, they should be punished according to the law.

Chris-  
tianity  
in the  
third  
century

History has often proved that, merely as a matter of state policy, a little persecution is worse than none. The fact that the Roman government was so moderate prevented its staying the progress of the outlawed cult. And the joyous courage with which the condemned welcomed martyrdom proclaimed the quality of their faith and converted many a spectator. The Christians, strangely enough, enjoyed a first respite from persecution through a vagary of the profligate Commodus. They again suffered under the Severi, and for another decade or so under the predecessors of Aurelian; then, during most of the third century, they were left in peace. Throughout that troubled period, indeed, the energy of the state was exhausted in meeting much more serious dangers than that offered by the mild followers of Jesus. Even when the emperors had time to devote to the Christian problem, their edicts were chiefly directed against the making of new converts—a tacit confession that the duty of punishing Christians was becoming arduous. Furthermore, it was one thing to issue a decree and quite another to put it into effect. The increasing hesitance of provincial governors to enforce the law is good evidence of its increasing unpopularity.

The third century was a period when many oriental mysteries made rapid progress; Christianity was one of them. During the earlier period, although Christian congregations had steadily multiplied in all the more important cities of the Mediterranean, they had mainly included the poor and uneducated. From now on, however, we hear of more and more Christians in all walks of life—even in wealthy and socially prominent families. By gaining recruits within the upper classes, the outlawed faith emerged from its earlier obscurity and attained new political significance. The time had passed when even an enlightened emperor could believe that the Christians were commonly addicted to cannibalism and other foul practices. But with its enhanced prominence Christianity encountered a graver peril than governmental persecution: once it had attracted the attention of the fashionable and learned, there was a danger that it might be absorbed into the mystic philosophy of the schools, and so lose its charming simplicity and practical force.

By the third century Christian apologists had clearly recognized the new enemy, and as a consequence their principal effort was

shifted from the refutation of the Jews to that of the Gnostics. The latter were an ill-defined group of writers who, while differing as to details, agreed in subordinating Christianity to a system of metaphysics. In order to explain how a material and imperfect world could be derived from a spiritual and perfect God, they imagined a series of divine emanations, called *æons*. One of them was the Creator described in the Old Testament; another was the Christ of the Gospels. Yet Christ, they held, was never really human; He was a spirit who merely pretended to die on the cross. Through this redemption those men in whom the material was overbalanced by the spiritual could secure salvation. Others, who were predominantly material, could not; while a select few, the Gnostics proper, could attain spiritual perfection through mystic philosophy, and so needed no savior at all.

The struggle against heresy

Against these and allied doctrines appeared such able writers as Irenæus under the Antonines, and Tertullian under the Severi, proving that scholarship and eloquence were no longer confined to the pagan schools. Thanks to their efforts, Gnosticism, as such, failed of any permanent success, but similar ideas constantly reappeared in new guises. The age, as we have seen, was one of syncretism, when Neo-Platonists and other mystics were alike engaged in an effort to combine all truth in a single authoritative system. To affirm that Christianity absorbed nothing from its rivals would undoubtedly be wrong, for the church early adopted the policy of "spoiling the Egyptians"—that is to say, of taking any worthy custom from an adversary and adapting it to a sacred end. It is probable, for example, that Christmas came to be celebrated in December because it would thus coincide with the great festival of the sun, which marked the first stage in the return of warmth and life to the earth. Easter corresponds to the pagan *Floralia*, the spring festival. And the Christian liturgy came to include many features common to a number of popular religions. In general, however, it must be admitted that, during this period of conflict, Christianity remained essentially what it had been from the beginning; that controversy served rather to define its characteristic teachings than to obscure them.

It had been a comparatively simple task for Christians to distinguish themselves from Jews and pagans; it was another matter, when various groups with conflicting ideas all pretended to be Christians, to separate the true from the false. Who should decide, and on what basis should the decision be made?

The principle of authority

From the second century on we constantly hear of heresies—of doctrines which were advanced in the name of Christianity but which were rejected by the faithful. The concept of heresy of course implies the concept of orthodoxy, the standard according to which opinions are to be tested. And the establishment of this standard implies a recognized authority, either of writings or of oral tradition.

The canon of the Old Testament In ecclesiastical history a collection of authoritative books is called a canon. The Christian Bible includes two such canons: that of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament. The former the church of course received from the Jews; so at first glance it might be supposed that the Jewish and the Christian canons would be the same. As a matter of fact, however, Christianity, being a Hellenized religion, did not take over the official collection of Hebrew writings, but the Septuagint—a Greek version drawn up for the use of Hellenized Jews in Alexandria. And this collection included various books that had never been written in Hebrew—those later rejected by the Protestants, or marked in their Bible as Apocrypha. The New Testament, on the other hand, is a purely Christian compilation. It could not be recognized all at once, for it was not all written at once. If a New Testament canon eventually came to be universally accepted, that was the result of a gradual process not unmarked by controversy.

The canon of the New Testament Throughout the second century, as we know from contemporary authors, certain of the New Testament writings were generally received as authoritative in all Christian communities. These were the Epistles of Paul, the four Gospels, and the book of Acts. With regard to epistles attributed to the other apostles, and to the book of Revelation, there was no such agreement. To them many local churches preferred writings that do not appear in the Christian Bible, notably the *Shepherd* of Hermas. As late as the fourth century we are told by Eusebius, the famous ecclesiastical historian under Constantine, that opinions were still divided on many books; so the determination of the canon as we have it was part of the more thorough organization given the church in the period immediately following. The point is, of course, that the particular collection known as the New Testament rests primarily on tradition. The inspired character of its separate parts had to be decided by men who themselves were somehow regarded as inspired. The recognition of an authorita-

tive Scripture ultimately depended on the recognition of authoritative leaders.

Whatever may have been the primitive system—and this is still a matter of violent controversy among the Christian sects—the church of the third century was based on the episcopate. Within each city the Christian congregation was considered a unit, subject to the jurisdiction of a bishop (*episcopus*, overseer). Under him were various grades of subordinates, mainly priests (*presbyter*, elder) and deacons (*diaconus*, helper). Among them they supervised Christian worship, cared for the sick and the needy, maintained discipline, and decided disputed questions. It was the bishops, however, upon whom devolved the chief responsibility; and their authority was justified by the theory of the apostolic succession, that the episcopal power was identical with and derived from that which had been given by Christ to the apostles. The bishops were thus held to be the guardians of sacred tradition. But what if they disagreed? As long as Christianity was unlawful, a practical solution of this problem was hard to find. To understand the outcome, we must therefore turn to the events that were to prove decisive for the organization of the church.

Episcopal  
organiza-  
tion

As remarked above, Christianity had been declared illegal under the principate, and its adherents had been consistently persecuted by the ablest of the princes. With the completion of absolute monarchy, the earlier policy would hardly be reversed. According to the previous system, the living emperor was accorded divine honors only in the provinces; Roman citizens were not required to worship him. Now, however, practically all distinction between citizen and subject was erased; the emperor was formally installed as a god, to be adored even by the highest nobles. How could such an autocrat be expected to justify Christian rebellion? The restoration of order inevitably led to another era of persecution. Aurelian, we are told, issued a decree against the Christians, but did not live to carry it out. So the campaign for suppression was left to be resumed by Diocletian. Why the latter took no action until late in his reign does not appear; but if there had been any doubt of his policy, it was removed by the edicts of 303. They proscribed the holding of Christian services and ordered the razing of Christian churches, the burning of the Scriptures, the imprisonment of the clergy, and the removal of all Christians from public office. Although

The last  
persecu-  
tion

there was no bloodshed under this law, Diocletian finally dropped halfway measures just before his abdication, and commanded that every one perform the accustomed state sacrifices or suffer the ancient penalties for refusal.

The conversion of Constantine

Enforcement, after the retirement of the elder Augusti, naturally came to depend on the personal disposition of their successors. In the west Constantius was inclined to be lenient; so the only violent persecution was in the east, where Galerius maintained bitter hostility toward the Christians until, on his deathbed in 311, he gave up the struggle and issued a decree of toleration. Meanwhile, Constantine had succeeded his father. Like most of the emperors since Aurelian, Constantine in his younger days seems to have been devoted to the sun god (*Sol Invictus*)—the cult which, together with the allied mystery of Mithras, was the ruling favorite of the army. He had been brought up in Gaul and Britain, among the least Christian of the provinces; nor is there any evidence that, through family connections, he had received any direct instruction in Christianity. Nevertheless, before his defeat of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in 312, Constantine seems to have become a convert to the faith.

According to the story reported by Eusebius as having been told by the emperor himself, Constantine, while advancing on Rome with his army, one afternoon saw in the sky a blazing cross with the motto IN HOC VINCE (In This Conquer), and during the following night Christ appeared to him in a vision with the same message. Historically, of course, we have no method by which the objective reality of such alleged miracles can be tested; but, to judge from the subsequent actions of Constantine, he must have believed himself the recipient of some mystic revelation. Before engaging in battle with Maxentius, he had the Christian name placed on the shields of his soldiers and, having won the victory, he spent the rest of his life as a fervent, if not ethically perfect, Christian. The design ✠<sup>3</sup> was placed on his military standards, and Christian symbols also appeared on his coins and monuments. Some time after 311 he persuaded Licinius to join with him in guaranteeing entire freedom of worship to the Christians. Subsequently their church was recognized as a corporation legally capable of holding property and performing

<sup>3</sup> The Greek letters *Chi Rho*, standing for *Christos*.

other acts. Besides, Constantine brought up his children in the Christian faith, more and more favored Christians in public office, and actively concerned himself with controversial problems of Christian doctrine.

Thus, in 314, Constantine called a council of the western bishops at Arles, to settle the question of the Donatists—a fanatical group in Africa who, refusing to recognize the newly installed bishop of Carthage, raised the broader claim that the official act of a clergyman, such as a baptism or a marriage, depended for its validity on his personal character. This doctrine the council refused to accept, and the Donatists were condemned.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the assembled bishops issued canons (in this sense, rules) dealing with a uniform date for Easter and various matters of ecclesiastical discipline. But within a few years there arose in the east a much more serious controversy, the echoes of which were to be heard for many generations.

The Council of Arles  
(314)

The trouble was started by a priest of Alexandria named Arius. By a logical process which to him seemed unescapable, he argued that, since Christ was the Son of God, He must have been younger than the Father; must, indeed, have been a creature rather than a divinity in the absolute sense. Otherwise, said Arius, Christians would have to admit that they were worshipping two Gods. This innocently propounded theory at once raised a storm of opposition. Eloquent champions—notably an Alexandrian archdeacon named Athanasius—at once arose to defend the traditional faith. They insisted that, although the doctrine of the Redemption necessitated belief in the human character of Jesus, Christians must also believe that He was truly God, or their customary worship would be no better than pagan idolatry.

Arianism

In 325 Constantine, following the policy already inaugurated at Arles, summoned the bishops from all Christendom to decide the question of Arianism in a great meeting at Nicæa—the first œcumenical (or general) council in the history of the church. Before the assembled prelates—perhaps three hundred in all, including some from beyond the Roman frontiers—the emperor appeared in person to urge the cause of unity. The answer was a nearly unanimous declaration condemning the views of Arius and prescribing the formula of Christian belief which, with later amendments, is still known as the Nicene Creed. The victory

The Council of Nicæa  
(325)

<sup>4</sup> The practical importance of the decision will be readily appreciated in connection with the sacramental system (see below, ch. iv).



thus lay with those who, like Athanasius, considered the dictates of practical religion paramount to other considerations; for the official dogma of the church, as now defined, was a frank statement of an insoluble mystery.

The new  
era for  
church  
and state

In another way the Council of Nicæa was a triumph for Constantine; under his sovereignty and on his initiative a world-wide Christian organization had been proved capable of legislating with regard to its own affairs. Thereby a great revolution in Roman history was completed, for the concepts of church and state that henceforth dominated politics were utterly foreign to classic tradition—belonged rather to the age which we call mediæval. True, paganism still remained lawful under Constantine, but his sons were to begin the long campaign for its suppression. With one exception, all the succeeding emperors professed Christianity; so the outcome could not be a matter of doubt. The faith that from the outset had asserted a monopoly of revealed truth could not be expected, now that it had gained control of the imperial conscience, to brook any rivals. Constantine himself, though he wisely refrained from any effort to Christianize his capital with its staunchly pagan senate, carried out a policy which he presumably regarded as a pious substitute: he built a new capital and there installed a new senate.

The found-  
ing of Con-  
stantinople

That the founding of Constantinople would eventually contribute to the dissolution of the empire and the development of a non-Latin state in the east Constantine, of course, could not foresee. And we may be sure that, if such a prospect had been magically revealed to him, he would have been appalled by it. His training had been almost exclusively western; he scarcely knew Greek at all. His fundamental policy seems essentially that of a Roman soldier-statesman, who believed that a mystic faith had led him to supreme authority in the world. The last stage in his upward career had been the war with Licinius. It was at least appropriate that a place which had been prominent in his final campaign should now be selected as the site for a new world-center—a monument to Christianity as well as to himself.

Constantine, in any case, needed no voice from heaven to make him appreciate the military strength of Byzantium. The old Greek colony occupied the point of a small peninsula that juts into the Bosphorus just where it widens into the Sea of Marmora—a position which dominates the passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and which cannot itself be attacked

from either. To the south of the promontory is the channel proper; to the north a narrow inlet called the Golden Horn, constituting a magnificent harbor. Across the peninsula Constantine threw a wall to enclose a space some four times as large as the ancient Byzantium. There he laid out his forum and raised his public buildings, including the senate-house, the palace, a number of baths, and the enormous hippodrome. The prominent features of Rome were all reproduced except one: in the new capital there were no pagan monuments. On his great column, indeed, Constantine put what had been a statue of Apollo, but the original head was now replaced by another, to represent the imperial founder.

Constantine formally consecrated his city in 330. From the west he brought many Latin colonists, and, with the growth of commerce, settlers naturally drifted to the new metropolis from all parts of the east. Within a hundred years another wall had to be built to enclose the flourishing suburbs that had grown up outside the first one. Thus arose one of Europe's greatest cities, destined to maintain at least a semblance of Roman glory for an incredibly long time. Its far-reaching significance for the history of the later empire must, however, be left to be considered in subsequent chapters. For the present it is necessary to divert our account from the classic lands of the Mediterranean to the people who were soon to occupy them.

### 3. THE BARBARIANS

In taking up the history of any age, it is impossible for the student to read far without encountering the terms state, nation, and race. And since they continue to be the source of much confusion, it might be well at this point to attempt an explanation of each. The modern European state is essentially a territory under the supreme authority of a particular government. No matter what he may think about it, the individual resident of such a state is subject to its jurisdiction. When, for example, a citizen of France crosses an imaginary line to the east, he ceases to be bound by French law and becomes bound by that of Germany. Yet, normally, he will still be considered a Frenchman. Although he leaves his state behind, he bears his nationality with him. A man's nation may sometimes be known from his language, but not always. There is no Swiss language or Belgian language, and a person who speaks Spanish may belong to any

The terms  
state,  
nation,  
and race

one of a dozen nations. Descent obviously has nothing to do with the case or there would be—to mention one familiar instance—no American nation.

On ultimate analysis, our present test of nationality will be found to rest on nothing but the feelings of the individual. To-day, it is true, every nation tends to have a government of its own—to be also a state. That is the result of very recent political developments. Throughout most of their history the states of Europe have been arbitrarily formed units, with boundaries drawn by accident or caprice; and the Roman Empire, though a state in our sense of the word, was the antithesis of the modern nationalistic system. To the Romans, *natio* (nation) and *gens* (tribe) were vague terms referring to local peoples each distinguished by name and custom. There were multitudes of such groups inside the empire and, of course, multitudes of others beyond the frontiers. In the following pages, unless otherwise indicated, “nation” will be used to imply nothing more than this.

If now we turn to the much abused word, race, it will be found to denote an altogether different concept. A man may change his state by moving away from it, his nation by transferring his affections; but his race he cannot change, because it is born with him. Properly understood, therefore, a race is a people marked off from others by hereditary characteristics—such as the black skin of the Negro. Although color, up to a certain point, is a useful guide in identifying races, it utterly fails when we come to consider the white inhabitants of Europe. Can they, according to some other scheme, be classified in distinct races?

Alleged  
races of  
Europe

It is still the confirmed habit of many writers to speak of a Celtic, Slavic, Germanic, Latin, or even an Aryan race. But such differentiation is based merely on language, and language—however significant for the growth of culture—is not inherited. There are many instances in history of a population that changed its language as the result of conquest or of intermarriage. We can never be safe in assuming that, because two groups spoke kindred tongues, they were related by blood descent. So, of more recent years, it has become fashionable to divide Europeans into other races. The traveler who crosses the continent will, in fact, have no difficulty in perceiving three dominant types of men. In the south the majority of the people are short and slender,

with dark complexions, black eyes, and long heads.<sup>5</sup> In the central regions, on the other hand, round-headed men become the rule—stocky men with medium complexions and brown eyes. In the north, finally, the inhabitants principally tend to be tall, fair, and blue-eyed; and to have, like the southerners, long heads. These three types—known respectively as Mediterranean, Alpine, and Nordic—are presented by a popular school of writers as marking the three fundamental races of Europe, through whose antagonisms and interminglings the entire history of the western world can best be elucidated.

Unfortunately for the student, the more closely this theory is examined, the weaker it appears. In the first place, the doctrine rests almost solely on modern observation of physical characteristics and takes for granted the primitive invasion of the continent by the three races exhibiting those characteristics. Aside from a few scattered bones and certain vague remarks by ancient historians, we actually have no evidence concerning the appearance of early European peoples. Secondly, it assumes that such physical traits as stature, complexion, and skull formation are essentially a matter of heredity. But this is strenuously denied by many scientists, who point out that climate, diet, and other environmental factors may produce radical alterations of human physique within a relatively short period of time. Lastly, even if we admit that such features as blondness and tallness and long-headedness constitute true tests of race, we are still left to wonder just what they may have to do with military genius, political capacity, commercial shrewdness, artistic skill, or any of the other qualities that make a people great in history. The conclusion must be that, although racial factors may have had tremendous importance for the development of European civilization, it is as yet impossible to define them or to assess their respective values. Until he can be more certain of his facts, the historian had better avoid the subject altogether. As far as the known history of Europe is concerned, the biologically pure race—whether alleged to be inferior or superior—is a figment of the imagination.

If now we turn to examine the actual inhabitants of the regions bordering on the Roman Empire, some, for the present, may be passed over with a mere glance. The Moors of northern

Frontier  
peoples

<sup>5</sup> That is to say, measuring more from back to front than from side to side.

Africa, the Arabs of Syria, and their more cultured neighbors, the Persians, need not occupy our attention until they rise to sudden prominence in connection with Mohammedanism. It is rather the great belt of peoples extending from the plateau of central Asia to the North Sea who first affect the destinies of the western provinces: the widely extended nomads of the desert and the steppe, and beyond them the Slavs, Celts, and Germans. These we may now take up in order.

The  
Asiatic  
nomads:  
Mode of  
life

The first group embraces a multitude of wandering tribes who appear in the pages of history under a great variety of names—Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Bulgars, Avars, Magyars, Mongols, Tartars, Turks, and the like. Originally they have spoken a class of languages known as Ural-Altaic—a term that implies nothing more than a certain geographic distribution. As far back as recorded history extends, these tribes have, in fact, populated the wide region between the Altai Mountains on the south and the Urals on the north; and this range of habitation is accounted for by the fact that their life has, until very recent times, been purely nomadic. Throughout that entire country of desert and plain, agriculture is impossible; the only way in which man may exist is through pasturage. He becomes a parasite dependent on his flocks and herds. If they die, he dies; where they go for food he has to go too. In the winter the slopes of the southern mountains provide the necessary pasturage and shelter, but with the advent of the summer drought the nomad is forced to take his animals to the northern grasslands. Thence, in turn, he is driven by the snows of the succeeding winter, to repeat the process interminably year in and year out.

Under such conditions, obviously, the nomad can have no settled habitation, and his personal belongings must be reduced to what can easily be carried on his long journeys—a tent made of skins, together with its poles; cooking utensils, felt rugs, and a few pieces of furniture. His wealth consists of his domestic animals, in this region principally horses and sheep. Aside from a little wild grain, with occasional fish or game, the nomad's food is almost exclusively dairy produce; and this is reduced, in case of a military expedition, to the milk of a few mares which the warrior drives along with him. Social organization naturally depends on the mode of life. The smallest unit is the family, as many persons as can occupy one tent. The tents are combined into camps, and these into clans and groups of clans. In general,

however, each chieftain does as he pleases, unless forced by superior show of arms to join some temporary coalition. Authority rests exclusively with the men, who leave all domestic labor to their womenfolk.

To the ordinary occupations of pastoral life the nomads, throughout countless centuries, added those of professional marauders, terrorizing and enslaving the peasantry of all exposed regions. The scourge of their raids was unceasing. Mounted on the tireless desert horses which they had been accustomed to ride since infancy, they covered unbelievable distances and struck without warning. In case of counter-attack, they could always find security in the wastes whence they had come. Inured to heat, cold, famine, and thirst, they passed with ease where others quickly perished. Normally these expeditions led to nothing that could be called political construction; but every once in a while, impelled by economic calamity or overpopulation, some extraordinary outpouring of nomads brought destruction to far-distant states and substituted the ruthless dominion of the invaders. Such episodes are familiar in the history of China, India, Persia, Syria, and even Egypt. Nor did Europe escape. Not long after the death of Constantine the tremendous drive of the particular horde known as Huns began to have repercussions all along the Rhine and the Danube.

In the eyes of civilized peoples, the Huns, like their kinsmen generally, seemed peculiarly loathsome. The chroniclers shudder at their savage fury and their bestial appearance. The primitive Asiatic nomad was indeed no beauty. Among his striking features are recorded a thick-set body with thin bowlegs; large round head and broad face; prominent ears, big mouth, and flat nose; dark eyes, widely spaced and obliquely sunken; yellowish or swarthy skin, sparse whiskers, and black, bristling hair. And this physical exterior seems to have been backed by a stark ferocity that daunted all antagonists. Many of the original nomad traits, however, were quickly lost when the invaders, whose numbers were always relatively small, remained in the midst of a subject population. Having left their own women far behind, they took mates from the conquered territories. So, in the course of time, although their descendents might keep the ancient name and perhaps the ancient language, they would inevitably be assimilated to the type of the masses.

Physical  
features

Among the peoples on whom the nomads preyed for countless

The Slavs generations were the Slavs, who lived to the north of the steppes and to the south of the Baltic tribes, many of which were Germanic. According to the writers who first mention them, the Slavs were originally fair-skinned, but—presumably through intermixture with Asiatics and others—they later tended to become predominantly dark. We know remarkably little about their racial origin; whatever it was, and however it may have been to blame, the rôle of the Slavs in early European history was almost exclusively that of the hunted and oppressed. Probably geographic location had much to do with their unfortunate destiny. Placed between Asiatic raiders from the south and Germanic raiders from the north, the Slavs suffered unspeakable torments year after year, century after century. Thousands were driven by alien conquerors to till distant lands; other thousands were carried into captivity and sold throughout the markets of the west—so that the name Slav<sup>6</sup> there came to designate the lowest person in society. Yet, out of their experience the Slavs developed a marvelous talent for passive endurance. Though they were not heroic, they lived and multiplied. As conquerors killed one another off, the Slavs inherited their lands. As the more warlike nations drove westward to despoil the provinces of Rome, it was the Slavs who crept into the vacated territories. Without a single battle to win the attention of the chroniclers, they made the plains of eastern Europe almost solidly Slavic.

The Celts In a much earlier age the Celts—or, as the Romans called them, the Gauls—had inhabited the great interior forests of Europe as far east as the Elbe. Thence, in a great migration that for a time threatened to wipe out the little republic of Rome, they swept across the Alps into Italy and across the Rhine into the country which was thenceforth known as Gaul. A first wave of invaders, the Gaels, occupied the islands off the northwest coast, but the better part of the principal island—which thereby got a permanent name—was subsequently conquered by a second wave of invaders called Britons. All the ancient writers tell us that the invading Gauls were tall and fair; later the Celtic-speaking peoples are found generally dark. So we may guess that a Nordic type was lost through intermarriage with Mediterranean peoples. And if the Gauls had not been a mixed people already, they assuredly became one after the Roman conquest. Compared with

<sup>6</sup> Thence is derived our word slave—one of the ironies of history, for in the original language the meaning was “glorious.”

that of other barbarians, the culture of the Celts was remarkably advanced; but as they became Latinized, its distinctive character was utterly lost. It was only in the wilder parts of the British Isles that the Celts, as such, continued to have an independent history. Thus we are brought to the people who came to play so dramatic a part in the politics of the later empire—the Germans.

The Germanic languages—like the Celtic, Slavic, Latin, Greek, and Sanscrit languages—constitute one group within the wider category known as Indo-European. Just how, if at all, the widely scattered peoples who spoke these related tongues were themselves related is not known; nor can we be sure that all the tribes who used a Germanic dialect were descended from one primitive stock. Presumably it was from the Gauls that the Romans learned to call their new neighbors *Germani*; at any rate, our usage is derived from the Latin. We may also be sure that the country which has been termed Germany for two thousand years was not the original home of the Germans, for their lands at first did not extend west of the Elbe. From the region about the Baltic the Germans moved southwest when the Celts migrated into Gaul, and archæologists tell us that the newcomers owed much to their predecessors in the way of culture, including the use of iron weapons.

The  
Germans:  
Early  
sources

From the pen of Julius Cæsar we have our earliest description of the Germans in any detail, but a much fuller account is given us, a century and a half later, by Tacitus in his *Germania*. This little book, it is true, must be taken with a grain of salt, for in many places the author obviously touched up his picture to drive home, by way of contrast, a lesson for his degenerate compatriots. On the whole, however, there is no reason for distrusting his information, which in many places is corroborated from other sources. Thus, with regard to the appearance of the Germans, Tacitus repeats the general verdict: "fierce blue eyes and reddish hair; great bodies, especially powerful for attack, but not equally patient of hard work; little able to withstand heat and thirst, though by climate and soil they have been enured to cold and hunger." Cæsar describes them as living mainly by pasturage, together with fishing and hunting; Tacitus emphasizes rather their agriculture.

None of the German tribes, he says, lived in cities; even within their villages each man's home was surrounded by a considerable



Mode of  
life

open space. They used no masonry or tile; their houses were built of rude lumber, sometimes smeared with colored earth. As much land was occupied by the village as it needed for the raising of grain—the only crop that was normally planted—and the fields were distributed among the villagers according to their rank. Because they had land to spare, they changed the arable yearly, and so did not exhaust the soil. But the German freeman was no agricultural laborer; he preferred the loot of war to the profits of honest toil. When not fighting, he spent his time in idleness, leaving all work connected with house and lands to his women and dependents. Among the Germans slaves were not primarily household servants, like those of the Romans; rather they were *coloni*,<sup>7</sup> provided with houses and plots for which they paid the lord a share of the produce.

By way of entertainment, the Germans had only one sort of show—an athletic sword dance in which the young men were very proficient. But they were also fond of gambling and of protracted drinking bouts, in which they consumed great quantities of a beverage fermented from barley and wheat (i.e., of course, beer). In other respects Tacitus describes their personal morals as being extraordinarily pure. He extols the simplicity of their marriage customs and the beauty of their family life. The picture that he paints is indeed so idyllic that he makes us suspect a little exaggeration. The individual Germans whom we later encounter were not at all models of virtue. And when Tacitus dwells on the almost superstitious regard in which the German women were held, we have to remember that it did not prevent their being given plenty of hard work.

Military  
and  
political  
organiza-  
tion

Only the menfolk played any part in warfare and politics. When the German youth attained man's estate, the ceremony marking the event was a formal gift of arms, corresponding to the assumption of the *toga virilis* at Rome. Thereafter he bore his shield and spear on all public occasions. The tribal assembly was essentially a military gathering. Proposals were there submitted by the chief men, and if the people approved, they clashed their weapons. This is the nearest approach to a political system that is found among the early Germans. Some tribes had kings, but the latter seem to have been little more than leaders in war. Certain families were regarded as noble, and everywhere the kindred group was very strong. Also there was the association described

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 25.

by Tacitus as the *comitatus*. Any famous chieftain might attract to himself a band of followers by the promise of adventure and booty. The relationship was highly honorable to both parties: the men received equipment and food, while in return they provided their leader with a distinguished retinue and made possible his exploits. Together they fought and enjoyed the profits of victory, or, in case of bitter fortune, together died. Of this custom much will be heard in later chapters.

Tacitus further gives, in connection with the geography of the country, a long list of separate German nations, few of which are ever heard of outside his pages. In his day a whole series of petty tribes extended along the Rhine. On the upper Danube were the Marcomanni and the Quadi; below them, along the Dacian frontier, the Asiatic Sarmatians. Within the next two centuries, however, this distribution of peoples was considerably changed. The Marcomanni and Quadi, after a desperate struggle, were definitely broken by Marcus Aurelius and ceased to be formidable. On the upper Rhine there emerged a new group of Germans who described themselves as Alamans (meaning "all men"), and it was to them that Aurelian was forced to relinquish the triangle between the two great rivers.<sup>8</sup> On the lower Rhine another mass of tribes coalesced to form the great nation of the Franks (meaning "free"); and the Saxons, who came to dominate the lands adjacent to the North Sea, were evidently a similar confederation. Meanwhile, from the interior came Burgundians, Vandals, and others, willing to fight any one for a chance to fight the Romans.

Germanic  
nations of  
the fourth  
century

An even greater migration was that of the Goths who—for reasons that remain obscure—struck south from the Vistula and, having overcome the Sarmatians, invaded the Danubian provinces. There, although checked by Aurelian, they kept possession of Dacia. Henceforth we find them settled in two loosely organized divisions along the northern shore of the Black Sea: to the west the Visigoths and to the east the Ostrogoths. Both groups, owing to their geographical location, were soon brought into contact with the culture of the empire, including Christianity, while their military prowess eventually involved them in politics at Constantinople. This was the situation as Rome weakened under the successors of Constantine.

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 8.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BARBARIZATION OF THE WEST

#### I. THE SUCCESSORS OF CONSTANTINE

Constantine's  
dynasty

THE death of Constantine in 337 had as its result a series of wars and assassinations that eventually exterminated his family. First of all, various nephews were murdered for the benefit of the three sons. Next, one of the latter was defeated and slain by a second, but he in turn fell before a usurper, who was finally disposed of by the third brother in 353. So it came about that Constantius II, whose original portion had been the east including Constantinople, reunited the empire under his sole authority and held it for some eight years. Then, in 361, the western armies proclaimed Julian, a nephew of Constantine who had somehow escaped the earlier massacre, and Constantius died while advancing against the rebel. Julian's short reign of three years was chiefly devoted to the revival and consolidation of paganism—a sort of mystic revenge for the deeds of his Christian cousins. By ecclesiastical historians, consequently, Julian has been branded with the name of Apostate (i.e., renegade); but the man's fascinating personality, combined with the tragic brilliance of his brief career, has made him a great favorite with the historical biographer.

Valentinian  
(364-75)  
and Valens  
(364-78)

In 363 Julian died of wounds received in battle with the Persians, and with him the dynasty of Constantine ended. A successor, hailed as Augustus by the army, lived to wear the purple for only one year. Then the office was secured in the same way by Valentinian. The son of a Pannonian peasant who had risen from the ranks to supreme command of the army in Britain, Valentinian was a thorough soldier with a reputation for strict discipline. As emperor, he set an admirable example to his subjects by hard work and honest devotion to the public interest. Since he was a Christian, he annulled Julian's edicts and reverted to the religious policy of Constantine. By economies and other reforms he sought to improve the administration and he gave his personal attention to the defense of the frontiers. Dying in 375, he was succeeded in the west by his able and experienced son,

Gratian; in the east he had already, at the request of the troops, installed as Augustus his brother Valens.

It was just before Valentinian's death that the Huns<sup>1</sup> appeared in Europe—an event that was to have momentous consequences for the empire. Sweeping across the steppe, the nomads fell upon the Ostrogoths, many of whom were immediately subjugated. Others fled westward to seek refuge in Dacia, whereupon some of the Visigothic chieftains appealed to Valens for permission to cross the Danube and to defend it as *fœderati*. Since there was long-established precedent for such action, and since hundreds of Goths had already proved their soldierly qualities in the Roman army, the request was granted. But Valens, now deprived of his brother's counsel, foolishly placed in charge of the crossing certain incompetent subordinates whose high-handed methods brought about a violent quarrel with the newly arrived Goths. Defying the Roman government, they turned to looting the neighboring provinces—a congenial undertaking in which they were quickly joined by other bands from beyond the frontier. Without waiting for the aid of Gratian, Valens led an inadequate force to drive the invaders back. The result was disaster. Near the city of Adrianople, in 378, the imperial army was destroyed and Valens himself was slain.

The  
battle of  
Adrianople  
(378)

The ultimate significance of the battle can only be appreciated in connection with the events of the ensuing century; for the moment it seemed to have no very serious consequences. To succeed Valens, Gratian at once designated his best general, Theodosius, through whose diplomacy the Balkans were soon pacified. The Visigothic tribes were settled along the frontier, and, having obtained what they had originally wanted, they held themselves in peace for the rest of the reign. The chief troubles of Theodosius arose in the west, where Gratian was defeated and slain by a usurper in 383. For the sake of the young Valentinian II, Gratian's half-brother, Theodosius was finally compelled to intervene. The upstart was executed and the boy emperor was reinstated. The real master of the western provinces, however, was Arbogast, a Frank who had attained high command in the army and who now bore the title of count. In 392 Valentinian was found strangled—the victim, as many believed, of Arbogast. He, at any rate, set up a new emperor to suit him-

Gratian  
(375-83)  
and  
Theodosius  
(379-95)

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 49.

self and so invited a punitive expedition on the part of Theodosius. In 394 a decisive battle was fought. Thanks to an opportune storm, which contemporaries regarded as a miracle from heaven, Theodosius won the victory; the rival emperor was slain and Arbogast committed suicide. Once more authority was held by a single prince, but it was only for a brief interval. Theodosius died in the next year, having already assured the succession of his two sons: in the east Arcadius, in the west Honorius. And since neither was competent for actual government, the former was placed under the tutelage of the prætorian prefect, Rufinus; the latter under that of the Vandal, Stilicho, master of horse and foot, *patricius*, and cousin by marriage of the young emperors.

From this tale of bloody deeds it may be seen that, in spite of administrative division, the unity of the empire was no mere theory under an emperor like Theodosius. Until 395 the traditions of Diocletian, Constantine, and Valentinian were well maintained. If there were two Augusti, one was normally a sort of senior partner, with a dominating voice in all major affairs. And both were supposed to be mature men, chosen primarily because of their ability to command armies and defend the state. To this rule Valentinian II was an exception; out of veneration for his father, he was raised to the purple at the age of four and he never became more than a puppet emperor. That, of course, was a matter of small consequence as long as there was a Gratian or a Theodosius in the background. But what would happen if both princes were incompetent? The career of Arbogast had already supplied the answer. The empire, for good or for evil, would be ruled by the great military commanders, who, like their armies, were now generally barbarian.

Barbarians  
and  
Romans

We are thus confronted by one of the crucial facts in the history of the fifth century—a fact that must be thoroughly appraised before the barbarian invasions can be at all understood. Arbogast has been called a Frank, and Stilicho a Vandal. Such identification was only a matter of descent. Both undoubtedly considered themselves Roman and were so considered by others; were, in fact, as Roman as legal right could make them. Both held high public office and enjoyed the loftiest distinction at court, and Stilicho was married to the favorite niece of Theodosius. Today in America we all know of men prominent in politics, business, or the professions, who are commonly referred to as Irish,

Italians, Germans, Poles, and the like, but who are none the less American citizens and worthy members of the community. In accent or manner they may or may not betray a foreign origin; in ability and culture they are vastly superior to thousands of Americans whose ancestors helped to found New England or Virginia. Their Americanization has depended on the degree to which they have been assimilated by the dominant element in society, not on their descent. To a certain extent it was the same in the Roman Empire: the question when a man ceased to be a barbarian was not always easy to answer.

On the Roman side there was assuredly no race prejudice—especially against the Germans, who frequently married into the noblest families of the empire. Barbarian charm had indeed become so fashionable among Roman ladies that a brisk trade was carried on in blonde wigs imported from the north. And it would be a grave error to suppose that the Germans, on their side, had the slightest feeling of nationalism. The barbarian hordes beyond the northern frontier were a heterogeneous lot—accidental combinations of tribes and fragments of tribes, who normally were as willing to attack each other as any one else. Defending the frontier were the Roman armies, but by the close of the fourth century they had long been recruited from among the barbarians. With them, whether or not they were Roman citizens, war was a profession; as long as they drew their pay, they cared nothing about the cause. Nor was any patriotism demanded of them. Individually they were good soldiers, armed and disciplined according to ancient Roman tradition. How well they fought depended largely on the quality of the high command.

In this respect the administration of Theodosius was entirely successful. Despite increasing pressure from the barbarian peoples, the frontiers were solidly held, as they had been during the previous hundred years. Economic conditions, we know, were not good; yet contemporaries could have seen little cause for violent alarm. There was no sudden deterioration; and the imperial government, though not always enlightened, was active and sincere in its efforts to carry out reforms. Finally, in connection with religious matters, the reign of Theodosius marked the definitive triumph of the Christian Church. Before recognition by Constantine, Christianity could not possibly—by the best estimates—have held the devotion of more than one-fifth of the

Theodosius  
and the  
Christian  
Church

population throughout the empire. It was accepted by the majority only after it had become the personal faith of the emperor and was specially protected by law. Then, during the fourth century, it made rapid headway in the army and in official circles. The rural districts, however, remained largely pagan—as the word (*paganus*, countryman) itself implies. Besides, the ancient cults had powerful support in such strongholds of tradition as Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Athens. The edicts of Constantine's sons proscribing all but Christian worship were declarations of pious intent, which merely threatened punishment; and they were of course repealed by Julian. Valentinian, as we have seen, merely restored the system of Constantine; so the establishment of Christianity as the only lawful religion of the state was primarily due to Theodosius.

In his earlier reign that emperor, to be sure, seemed inclined to maintain the tolerant policy of Valentinian; it was Gratian who first defied pagan sentiment by removing the statue of Victory from the senate-house in Rome. Later, when Theodosius—as he believed—had defeated Arbogast through the direct intervention of God, his faith became more aggressive. With Ambrose,<sup>2</sup> the great archbishop of Milan, as his spiritual director, Theodosius deliberately undertook to suppress every enemy of Christianity. Pagan temples were converted to secular purposes, turned into Christian churches, or destroyed by fanatics. Minor acts of pagan worship were punished with fines, while the performance of sacrifices was defined as treason, involving the death penalty. At the same time Theodosius prescribed uniformity of Christian doctrine. Arianism,<sup>3</sup> which had continued popular in the east even after the Council of Nicæa, was now condemned afresh and its supporters were compelled to submit or to go into exile. Severe measures were also enacted against other sects that denied the tenets of the orthodox faith. Thus came into being the laws against heresy which were to serve as a precedent for all Christian states during the next thousand years. And the fact that so many generations elapsed before educated men commonly disagreed with Theodosius shows how inevitable his policy was. Religious toleration is natural only in an age of doubt and dissension.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 43.

## 2. THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

It was an unfortunate coincidence for the Roman Empire that both sons of Theodosius were totally unfit to govern, so that in a time of crisis all decisive action devolved on their respective ministers. In the west the actual ruler was Stilicho, *patricius*, master of troops, and soon the father-in-law of the emperor. These honors, it would seem, failed to satisfy the ambitious Vandal, for at the first opportunity he led an army toward Constantinople. There Arcadius had been placed under the control of Rufinus, the prætorian prefect. The latter, however, had many rivals—among them various barbarian generals. Likewise eager for power was the talented Alaric, whom the Visigoths now joined in recognizing as their king. Theodosius, it will be remembered, had settled that people as *fœderati* along the lower Danube. Northwest of them were established in the same way various bands of Ostrogoths and Huns; and on the Rhine similar settlements of Franks and others had existed from a much earlier time. The status of the Visigoths, accordingly, was no novelty. Nor was the fact that they should decide to have a king at all disturbing to Roman tradition; such a title implied merely the leadership of a protected tribe and had nothing to do with territorial sovereignty. Alaric, however, longed for high command in the Roman army, and his people wanted better lands; so, on the accession of Arcadius, the Goths rose in revolt and invaded the defenseless provinces of Thrace and Macedonia.

Stilicho, for reasons best known to himself, avoided hostilities with Alaric and marched on Constantinople, where he connived at the assassination of Rufinus. Then, being occupied for several years with affairs in Italy and Africa, he left the Goths free to continue their depredations, while a series of adventurers fought for control of the eastern capital. The result was that Alaric finally extorted from Arcadius an official military appointment and, having equipped his followers as Roman soldiers, prepared for larger operations. Just what encouragement Alaric received from Constantinople remains doubtful, but in 401 he turned west, apparently hoping to force profitable concessions from Honorius. The time was well chosen, for his invasion of Italy came just as Stilicho was faced with the task of driving back other hordes of restless barbarians from the upper Danube. For a number of years he staved off a crisis by dividing his force against the other, and



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to strengthen the defenses of Italy, he called legions from the west, thereby abandoning Gaul and Britain to their fate.

Alaric's  
sack of  
Rome  
(410)

During all this turmoil, Honorius had done nothing more than look after his personal safety. Shutting himself up in Ravenna, which had the double protection of walls and impenetrable marshes, he had permitted his master of troops to assume all responsibility and win all the glory. Now, at last, the emperor asserted himself. In a fit of jealous fear, he commanded the execution of Stilicho on a charge of treason (408). The order was carried out, and so passed from the scene the one man able to check the advance of Alaric. The latter immediately invaded Italy, where he spent over a year negotiating with the fickle Honorius and levying blackmail on the panic-stricken inhabitants. Finally, as the emperor still refused to meet his demands, he starved Rome into submission and gave the city to his followers for three days' pillage. Laden with booty and holding as a hostage the emperor's sister, Galla Placidia, Alaric then turned toward the southern ports where ships had been collected for an expedition to Africa. But his fleet was destroyed by a storm, and before the end of the year the great adventurer was dead—buried, according to the famous story, in the bed of a river temporarily diverted from its course.

To contemporaries Alaric's sack of Rome seemed a frightful calamity. Pagan writers blamed it on the desertion of the ancient gods, while Christian apologists called it divine retribution for the sins of the Romans. Neither group could restore the lost prestige of the empire. Although the Goths had done little more than carry off a mass of loose treasure, the incapacity of Honorius and the defenseless state of his dominions were clearly advertised to the world. Theoretically the empire continued; actually, in the west, it disintegrated. Virtually the whole region beyond the Alps lapsed into political chaos—the prey of barbarian chieftains and other local tyrants. The last of the old army in Britain was taken to Gaul by a usurping emperor, who was killed in 412. Meanwhile, as the Rhine frontier had been stripped of its defenders, hordes of Germans crossed it at will, to take whatever they pleased.

Along the lower valley were the Franks, divided into two main groups: Salian and Ripuarian, the dwellers by the sea (*sal*, salt) and the dwellers by the river (*ripa*, bank). In the later fourth century the Salian Franks had already occupied the territory be-

tween the Meuse and the Scheldt, where, after checking their further advance, Julian had recognized them as *fœderati*. Since this was a thinly populated region of marsh and dune, the settlers had made it thoroughly their own; in the fifth century it knew neither the Latin language nor Christianity. Meanwhile the Ripuarian Franks had been repeatedly prevented from crossing the frontier. Now, under Honorius, their ambitions were gratified and they gradually took over the country between the Rhine and the Meuse, together with the cities of Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Trier. Beyond the Moselle, however, their progress was blocked by the Burgundians, who had taken Worms, and by the Alamans, who had settled the region thenceforth known as Alsace. About the same time a conglomerate horde of Vandals, Sueves, and Alans<sup>4</sup> passed over the Rhine at Mainz and, without stopping to preempt any of the frontier districts, pushed on through the heart of Gaul into Aquitaine. In 409 they crossed the Pyrenees into Spain, already paralyzed by civil war. There, after two years of ravaging, they were assigned lands as *fœderati*; but they were not to enjoy their new status for long.

The  
Germans  
in Gaul  
and Spain

In 412 southern Gaul was occupied by the Visigoths under Alaric's brother, Ataulf. He came with a sort of authorization from Honorius, and within a short time he had persuaded Galla Placidia to become his bride. Ataulf was murdered, but the event served only to strengthen the Roman alliance; for Constantius, the new commander of the emperor's troops, was willing to pay the Goths handsomely for the return of Galla Placidia. The upshot of this melodramatic story was that the princess went back to Rome, married Constantius, and in due course of time became the mother of the boy who was later to be crowned as Valentinian III. Wallia, the successor of Ataulf, was commissioned by the government to take Spain away from the Vandals and their allies. After a terrific war, the Visigoths destroyed one division of the Vandals and most of the Alans. The survivors then joined in electing a king, the famous Gaiseric, who in 429 transferred his whole people into Africa. Of the original invaders, only the Sueves were left in Spain, occupying the region of Galicia in the northwest corner. The rest of the peninsula eventually fell to the Visigoths, who came to hold a well-organized kingdom on both sides of the Pyrenees. In Africa Gaiseric met with no efficient

The  
Vandals in  
Spain and  
Africa

<sup>4</sup> Other Sueves (or Suabians) gave their name to a region of southern Germany. The Alans were not Germans, but Asiatic nomads related to the Huns.

resistance. Within a dozen years he had taken Carthage and had forced Rome to recognize his possession of all the better provinces west of Tripoli. From this advantageous position the Vandals, collecting a powerful fleet, developed a profitable business of piracy through all the adjacent seas—the first time in many centuries that the Roman Empire had felt the lack of a navy.

The  
Saxons in  
Britain

The later fifth century thus found a Vandal kingdom in Africa, a Suevic kingdom in Spain, a Visigothic kingdom in southern Gaul and in Spain, and to the north a series of smaller kingdoms held by Alamans, Burgundians, and Franks. Britain, meanwhile, had long since been abandoned by the imperial government. Honorius, in answer to appeals for aid, told the provincials that they would have to look after their own defense as best they could. Their best was not very efficacious. From the north Picts swept over the wall which Hadrian had built against them; the western coasts were ravaged by Scots from Ireland, the eastern coasts by Saxons from the shores of the North Sea. The attacks of these German pirates were, of course, no novelty in Britain, but it was not until the collapse of the military government under Honorius that they began to have momentous consequences. The details of the Saxon occupation given us by later chroniclers cannot be trusted. We may only be sure that about the middle of the fifth century sporadic raids gave way to permanent settlement; and as this progressed, Latin civilization was wiped out. The surviving British, in so far as they were not enslaved by the invaders, were driven into the mountainous regions of the west.

Valen-  
tinian III  
(425–55)  
and Aëtius

In the midst of the havoc to which his weakness had largely contributed, Honorius died, to be succeeded by the four-year-old Valentinian III. Since the boy's father was already dead, Galla Placidia, ex-queen of the Visigoths, now became regent. That lady—for all her remarkable energy—could not command an army in the field; so she raised an able general, Aëtius, to be *patricius* and master of troops. By this time the imperial army in Italy was reduced mainly to Hunnic mercenaries, and the fact that Aëtius had spent several years living among that people undoubtedly influenced his military career. Thanks to the Huns, he first secured control of Italy; then he undertook the restoration of Roman sovereignty in Gaul. As long as the barbarians remained within the regions that had been assigned them, Aëtius left them alone. When, however, the Burgundians attempted to extend

their power to the west, they were given over to the mercy of his Hunnic followers. Only a remnant of the nation survived, to be resettled in the country about Geneva, whence they spread south into the valley of the Rhone. Against the powerful Visigothic kingdom Aëtius had no such success; and as it turned out, his hostility was rather abruptly changed to warm friendship. The cause lay to the eastward.

The Huns, as we have seen, had many years ago established themselves in southeastern Europe, but until the opening of the fifth century they had never been combined in more than a loose confederation of tribes under separate chieftains. Then, about the time of Alaric, one Rua, or Rutila, had secured recognition as king throughout a wide region extending from the valley of the Don to that of the Danube. Rua was succeeded by his two nephews, one of whom, Attila, finally became sole king in 444. Physically, this famous chief is described as of the primitive nomad type which western eyes found so hideous; and in character he was also like his fellows—treacherous, cruel, and rapacious. Attila, however, was no mere brigand. He was possessed of a keen intelligence and, though illiterate, was a shrewd judge of men—a born leader and diplomat. Extending and consolidating the dominion taken over from his uncle, Attila held terroristic sway over countless thousands of Slavs and Germans. The former, as usual, were treated as enslaved peasants; the latter—including Ostrogoths, Heruls, Gepids, and many others—were forced to serve in the Hunnic army. With such an overwhelming force at his disposal, Attila was able to treat even the proud Roman Empire as a mere dependency.

Attila and  
the Huns

In the east the government of Theodosius II proved scarcely better than that of Arcadius. The Huns invaded the Balkan provinces at will and carried devastation to the very outskirts of Constantinople. Year after year the treasury was drained of gold to provide Attila with regular tribute, thinly disguised as pay for his services in the Roman army! Then, about the time that Theodosius died (450), Attila decided to shift operations to the west. Up to this point he had remained on good terms with Aëtius and had continued to permit many of his subjects to enlist in the army of Valentinian III. Now, all at once, Aëtius found himself deprived of his regular force and menaced by a terrifying host of invaders. As the Germans along the Rhine were neither united nor reliable, his only possible resource was a

The Battle  
of the  
"Cata-  
launian  
Fields"  
(451)



Visigothic alliance. Fortunately for the Roman cause, Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, recognized the common danger and proceeded north to join Aëtius with a splendid army of veterans. In the ensuing battle, fought in the region now known as Champagne, Attila was checked; and although Theodoric was numbered among the slain, it was he who deserved credit for the victory.

The death  
of Attila  
(453)

The result of this famous battle was that Gaul for the time escaped further devastation; beyond that all affirmation is hazardous, for we cannot tell what Attila would have done had he gained the day. It is very unlikely that, except for the purpose of exacting tribute, he planned any extensive conquest. As a matter of fact, his army was not destroyed; and Aëtius seems to have used his influence to prevent his allies from following up the victory—indicating that he feared the Goths as well as the Huns. However this may be, Attila proceeded without hindrance to invade Italy, but after approaching Rome and collecting blackmail, he for some reason turned north again, to die in 453. With the passing of their great leader, the Huns once more scattered to the four winds and their empire disappeared as rapidly as it had come into being. The subjugated Germans regained their independence and for the most part entered the Roman service as mercenaries or settled in the Danubian provinces as *fœderati*.

The end  
of the  
Theodosian  
dynasty

At Constantinople, meanwhile, the dynasty of the great Theodosius had ended in 450 with the death of his grandson, Theodosius II, whose one great contribution to history was the code that bears his name—a collection of imperial edicts issued since the accession of Constantine.<sup>5</sup> Theodosius II had no heirs, but at the last moment he designated as his successor a brave soldier named Marcian, whose reign was chiefly remarkable for his refusal to pay the accustomed tribute to the Huns. Fortunately for the emperor, Attila's diversion toward the west and his subsequent death obviated the danger of reprisals, and comparative peace once more prevailed along the eastern frontier. Marcian's reign lasted for only seven years, when the commander of the German mercenaries secured the elevation of an obscure general named Leo. Then, to the surprise of all, the new emperor executed his patron and replaced the German troops with Isaurians,

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 120.

wild mountaineers from southern Asia Minor. Leo's chief dependence was the Isaurian chieftain Tarasicodissa, whose name was changed to Zeno when he married the emperor's daughter. As the result of that happy alliance, Zeno himself secured the throne in 474; and the new Rome, though ruled by a strange Roman, at least escaped the danger of a German dictatorship.

In the west, the old tale of incompetence and treachery, of murder and pillage, still continued. Galla Placidia died in 450, leaving the general Aëtius all-powerful at court. Valentinian III did nothing until 454, when he unexpectedly developed enough energy, with the help of another conspirator, to murder Aëtius—a deed which led to his own assassination in the following year. With this appropriate termination of the Theodosian house, the emperors at Rome became a series of puppets, set up and pulled down by barbarian chieftains. Momentarily, indeed, Italy was left without a military government, and the crafty Gaiseric used the opportunity for carrying out an unhampered sack of the capital. Sailing up the Tiber, the Vandals deliberately and systematically stripped Rome of its treasures, including even the gilded roofs of the temples. Yet in spite of the reputation attached to their name in popular language, the Vandals seem to have stopped short of wanton destruction. Like Alaric's Goths, they left the city empty of valuables, but standing.

A few months later such an enterprise would have been impossible, for Ricimer, a Suevic adventurer, by disposing of various rivals, secured the position earlier held by Aëtius and Stilicho. Until his death Ricimer ruled Italy to suit himself, installing four emperors one after the other and treating all with open effrontery. For a short time after 472 no successor to Ricimer's office appeared, and in the interim an emperor was sent over from Constantinople—a feeble effort toward imperial unity that accomplished nothing. In 475 Orestes, ex-secretary of Attila, obtained control of the army and deposed the eastern candidate in favor of his son, Romulus, nicknamed Augustulus. The troops who had made possible the *coup d'état* were German mercenaries—Heruls and others who, since the death of Attila, had been settled in the Danubian provinces—and they now demanded their reward. Instead of being quartered in barracks, they wanted lands on which they could live like other barbarian gentlemen. Orestes refused; so the army proclaimed as king one of their own number, a certain Odovakar, or Odoacer, and in 476 he

Ricimer  
(456-72)  
and  
Odoacer  
(476-93)

slew Orestes and deposed Romulus. The comedy was now played out. Odoacer dispensed with the farce of a western emperor and sent the imperial insignia to Zeno at Constantinople, who in return allowed him the traditional title of *patricius*.

The end  
of the  
western  
emperors  
(476)

In theory, the empire was once more united under one Augustus, but this was mere pretense. Odoacer, whatever his Roman title, ruled as the king of the Heruls and the other Germans who had raised him on their shields. Italy, with the removal of the shadow-emperor, became frankly a barbarian kingdom, like those already established in Africa, Spain, Britain, and Gaul. So, although the events of the year 476 were in themselves relatively insignificant, they served to proclaim the passing of a great state. By the later fifth century Rome as a world power was dead, and in its place had definitely emerged a new political system which thenceforth, with temporary interruptions, was to characterize Europe.

The rise of  
Theodoric  
the  
Ostrogoth

As long as he was left undisturbed, Odoacer was entirely willing to maintain the fiction of imperial control; but his reverence did not extend to the point of tamely submitting when, in 488, Zeno sent another man to oust him. This was Theodoric the Ostrogoth, whose career is worth describing in some detail because it may be considered the ideal of all the barbarian adventurers. After the death of Attila, many Germanic peoples who had been subjects of the Huns were admitted as *fœderati* to the Danubian provinces. Among them were three Ostrogothic tribes under their respective kings. The usual altercations then ensued over lands and subsidies, with the result that in 461 the emperor Leo arranged a new treaty with his troublesome allies; and in this connection one of the three kings sent his son Theodoric as a hostage to Constantinople. There the boy remained for eight years, acquiring a warm admiration for Roman ways and absorbing at least a modicum of Greek and Latin culture.

In 471, on the death of his father, Theodoric was elected king, and he immediately became involved in the maze of intrigue and violence which then characterized imperial politics. Theodoric played his cards skillfully and for a time enjoyed high favor at court, rising to be a Roman citizen, master of troops, and *patricius*. In the year 484 he was actually named as one of the two consuls for the capital. He disposed of various rivals and united the Goths under his leadership. But before long he was again at odds with the emperor and fell back on Alaric's device of ex-

torting further concessions by ravaging Thrace. Finally, in 488, Zeno hit upon the happy expedient of sending him to Italy with a commission against Odoacer. A change of administration in the west could not hurt the emperor, and he would be rid of a man who had grown dangerously powerful.

Theodoric accepted the proposal and in 489 led his Ostrogoths over the Alps toward Rome. A series of battles gave him the mastery of the peninsula, except for the city of Ravenna, where Odoacer withstood a siege of two and a half years. Then, under the auspices of the local bishop, a treaty was sworn by the antagonists under which they agreed to share the rule of Italy. As far as Theodoric was concerned, this was a mere ruse; for in the course of the banquet held to celebrate the reconciliation, he suddenly fell upon Odoacer and slew him. At the same time his troops carried out a general massacre of all important persons in the opposing army. By this murder—and was it much fouler than that committed by Valentinian III?—the Ostrogoth became the unchallenged ruler of Italy. He made no change in legal relationships. Like Odoacer, he continued to hold a sort of imperial lieutenantancy, implied by his titles of *patricius* and master of troops, together with a personal kingship over his Germanic followers. How he organized his state will be seen in the following section.

Theo-  
doric's  
conquest  
of Italy  
(489-93)

### 3. THE GERMANS IN THE EMPIRE

From the facts noted above it should be quite clear that the Roman Empire did not fall through the shock of foreign conquest or become barbarized through any deliberate attack on its ancient culture. When we come to examine the problem closely, it is by no means simple to tell just what the barbarian invasions were. In the later fourth century the empire already contained thousands of Germans, but they were not invaders. They were men recruited by the government to serve in the regular army or settled as auxiliaries along the frontiers. The former, especially, often attained full Roman rights and rose to high positions in state and society. If they failed to become thoroughly Latinized, it was not because of antagonism on their part. The case of Alaric was fundamentally nothing new. In spite of attendant disorders, the Visigoths were officially admitted to the empire and awarded definite legal status. Alaric, like Stilicho, became master of troops in the imperial army. Although his

The nature  
of the  
barbarian  
invasions

methods were somewhat crude, he did not introduce civil war and rapine as novelties to the Roman troops.

Then came the great barbarian inroads into Gaul. Franks, Alamans, Burgundians, Vandals and others poured across the frontier. Most of them, presumably, came without invitation; yet, ultimately, their occupation of Roman soil was legalized and their position in the state became indistinguishable from that of other *fœderati*, such as the Visigoths and the Salian Franks. And when the mercenaries of Orestes revolted and proclaimed Odoacer as their king, they also were given lands and so became domiciled allies like the rest. Where does employment of barbarians end and invasion by barbarians begin? If we allow ourselves to become fascinated by the forms of law, we may ultimately decide that there were neither invasions nor barbarians; that there was neither a western empire nor a fall of Rome.

The truth is, of course, that by the fifth century legal theory was wholly belied by actuality. Under Aurelian Dacia was definitely abandoned to the Goths; under Valentinian III Britain was no less definitely abandoned to the Saxons. For a time the imperial government kept up a pretense of authority in Africa; but in the face of Gaiseric's deeds, it could have deceived no one. By more gradual stages, Spain and Gaul were also lost. Whatever the official explanation of settlement by *fœderati*, those provinces were conquered and organized into kingdoms by various Germanic peoples. After 476, although Zeno in theory held the administration of an undivided empire, and although his sovereignty was specifically recognized by Odoacer and Theodoric, he had as little real power in Italy as in Dacia. Zeno, himself a soldier and a semibarbarous one at that, unquestionably realized the truth. If he did nothing to change the situation, it was because he lacked the strength. Before long the strength was to be found, and used, by the clear-sighted Justinian.

The fate  
of the east  
contrasted  
with that  
of the west

Another question raised by the history of Rome in the fifth century is why the eastern half of the empire was able to survive while the western half fell into ruin. The entire administrative system, civil and military, was the same in both regions, and it was a Latin, not a Greek, creation. Why should it perish in the land where it was native and persist in that where it was foreign? In the time of Augustus Hellenic civilization had long seemed decadent; yet it outlived that of the younger and presumably more vigorous people. In large part this strange cul-

mination was due to mere accident. Although the empire, through sheer weakness, was doomed to lose some of its western provinces, Italy could surely have been held if the government there had been a little more efficient. The rulers of the east were remarkable neither for wisdom nor for energy. It was only their good fortune that, sooner or later, most of the barbarian hordes were attracted to the rich lands of the west, and that the Persians launched no great offensive for another century and a half.

Nevertheless, the divergent fate of east and west throughout the ensuing centuries suggests that we are dealing with something more fundamental than what we call luck. The empire in the east displayed a really astonishing vitality, surviving the Theodosian dynasty for a thousand years. During this entire period its life was the city of Constantinople, which still maintained the imperial tradition after all its provinces had been given up. The old capital was utterly unable to support itself, for its population produced nothing. Deprived of the surrounding dominions from which its wealth had been drawn, Rome was faced with extinction. Even as a military position, it was inferior to many other cities; Alaric proved that it could easily be reduced by cutting off the grain supplies from Africa. The new capital, on the other hand, quickly became the center of a flourishing trade that down to the present has never lagged. Like Alexandria, it has been a constant source of wealth for the power that has held it. And of all cities ever built, it is one of the most impregnable. Being on the sea, it cannot be starved into submission by a land force; with proper defense, it is immune from attack by water. How could a state utterly fail when it held Constantinople?

In this connection it may be noted that the imperial government in the east continued to run on a cash basis, employing a paid bureaucracy and a mercenary army—which would obviously have been impossible if commerce had not been the chief resource of the state. It is surely significant that by the end of the fifth century the emperor was able to repeal much of the oppressive legislation contained in the Theodosian Code—such as the burdensome tax on trades and professions, the responsibility of the curial class for the *annona*, and various other measures which had tended to impose a caste system on society. In the west no economic recovery took place. Instead, the decline that

The  
continued  
decline of  
Latin  
culture

had begun to have serious consequences in the third century gained increasing headway, to culminate, after the barbarian invasions, in what is known as the Dark Age.

Inevitably, under such conditions, the decay of Latin arts and letters continued unchecked. The restoration of order under Diocletian and Constantine, it is true, led to a sort of literary revival extending from the later fourth to the early sixth century. Yet, as will be seen in the next chapter, it produced almost nothing that was vital or original; and the Christian writings of that age, which included some eminent works, were in both style and spirit utterly foreign to the classic tradition. It is plain that, in many respects, the barbarization of society actually preceded the barbarian invasions. Latin culture had been weakening for two centuries before the reign of Honorius. The new rulers of the provinces were not altogether to blame for the continuation of the process. Many of them, in fact, were interested in preserving what they could of Roman institutions.

Ulfilas  
(d. 383)  
and his  
Gothic  
Bible

Of all the barbarians who settled within the empire in the fifth century, the Goths were furthest advanced in civilization. Even before they were permitted to cross the Danube, most of them had been converted to Christianity. Their first bishop was Ulfilas. It is said that one of his parents was a Greek Christian who had been captured by the barbarians. At any rate, Ulfilas was brought up in the faith and he devoted his life to spreading it among his countrymen. It so happened, however, that he had been trained and consecrated by the bishop of Constantinople, who was then the leader of the Arian faction. Ultimately, the Goths had the tragic experience of finding that they were heretics. In an age when such questions aroused a fanatical animosity that to us seems incredible, Arianism was to prove a great disadvantage to all the nations that upheld it—not only to the Goths, but also to the Vandals, the Burgundians, and the Lombards.

Along with Arianism, Ulfilas introduced the Goths to a regular system of writing—an art which the primitive Germans seem to have regarded as a sort of magic. From an early time certain rudimentary letters, or runes, had been known to a few skilled persons among them, who thereby were able to send secret messages and, according to legend, to make powerful charms. Occasionally runes were also used for inscriptions on monuments, sword blades, and the like; but as far as we know, they were

never adapted to more extensive composition. Accordingly, it was not until a Germanic people had been converted to Christianity that its spoken dialect as a whole came to be expressed in writing, and for that purpose the Greek or the Latin alphabet was employed. In the history of literature the Gothic translation of the Scriptures by Ulfilas ranks as a momentous event, for it gives us our first direct knowledge of a Germanic language. The work is doubly precious because, on settling within the empire, most of the Germans adopted Latin for official and literary productions.

All the barbarian kingdoms on Roman soil at the end of the fifth century combined Roman and Germanic institutions, but the combination was in varying proportions. The most thoroughly Roman was that of the Ostrogoths in Italy. Thanks to good accounts of Theodoric by contemporary Greek historians, to the letters of his talented secretary, Cassiodorus, and to the legal compilation described as the *Edict of Theodoric*, his government is very fully known. Under him the ancient administrative system continued without a break. He was surrounded by officials bearing the same titles as of old—governor, vicar, prætorian prefect, master of offices, count of the sacred largesses, and the like. At Rome the consuls and other magistrates were still annually installed and the senate still enjoyed tremendous prestige. Theodoric's decrees were principally devoted to the enforcement of the Roman law. His taxes were the same as those collected under the Theodosian house. He even distributed grain to the populace of the capital and provided the accustomed shows. All military power, on the other hand, was reserved to the Goths, who were settled as *fæderati* on the lands assigned to them—presumably in the north of Italy. They continued to be governed by their ancient customs, because, not being Roman citizens, they had no recourse to the Roman law. They could not marry into Roman families and they were not eligible to civil office. This, however, was a legal disability, not one of race or of nationality. By act of the emperor a Goth might be made a Roman, as in fact Theodoric himself had been; and he was very proud of the rank.

The government of  
Theodoric  
in Italy  
(493-526)

In strict theory the kingship of the Ostrogoth, like that of Odoacer, was a personal leadership conferred by a group of Germans domiciled in the empire; his military and civil authority in Italy rested upon offices given him by Zeno. When dealing



His  
devotion  
to Roman  
ideals

with the barbarian princes of the west, he acted as one sovereign among others, but he always treated the emperor with great deference. His scrupulous attitude in such matters and the careful distinctions maintained throughout his government were not at all necessary; they arose from his admiration of Rome and all that it stood for. In every possible respect Theodoric conscientiously tried to be a good Roman. Although he is said to have been illiterate, the greatest Latin writers of the day served at his court: Cassiodorus as his secretary, and Boëthius as his master of offices.<sup>6</sup> He paid considerable attention to the repairing of aqueducts and other ancient monuments; and he himself erected buildings at Ravenna that rivaled in splendor the earlier structures of Galla Placidia—not of course in the style misnamed Gothic, but in that called Byzantine.<sup>7</sup> He favored the church and, in spite of the fact that he was an Arian, kept on remarkably good terms with the orthodox clergy. So great was his reputation for honesty that a disputed election to the bishopric of Rome was brought to him for settlement. He was a firm believer in toleration and, once in power, generally abstained from acts of terrorism. Aside from the rather mysterious execution of Boëthius on a charge of treason, his reign ended in general tranquillity and good feeling—a bright interlude in a gloomy tragedy of degradation.

The  
Visigothic  
kingdom

Next to Theodoric's kingdom, that of the Visigoths was the strongest and best governed in the west. That people, as already remarked, had long been lawfully established in Aquitaine, and, as the consequence of their wars with the Vandals, had extended their dominion into Spain, where they encroached more and more upon the Roman provinces and upon the Suevic kingdom in the northwest. Under their able and warlike king, Euric (466-84), the Visigoths also pushed rapidly eastward until they had secured most of Provence. Euric, like Theodoric, issued a code of law, and from it we can glean considerable information concerning the institutions of his state. In general, the government still followed Roman precedent, but not so completely as that of the Ostrogoth. Most of the great administrative officials had disappeared. Each city with its surrounding territory was under the control of a count. Romans and Goths were legally distinct, each group being subject to its own law; and most of the Goths still

<sup>6</sup> See below, p. 96.

<sup>7</sup> See below, p. 127.

wore their barbarian dress and spoke their native language. The two groups of noblemen, however, dwelt side by side, gaining a livelihood from estates worked by slaves and *coloni*; and the invaders, being numerically weaker, soon tended to lose many of their old peculiarities. Latin was the language of the government and was generally spoken by all persons in authority. Although Germanic custom still persisted, it was of secondary importance.

Much the same conclusions may be drawn with regard to Africa, where, in spite of their military prowess, the Vandals were swallowed up in a Latin population. What seems to be a reliable estimate—indeed a rarity in the chronicles of that day!—gives the number of the Vandals who crossed from Spain as 80,000 all told. So Gaiseric's force of warriors could hardly have been larger than that of Alaric after the sack of Rome, which is reported as 40,000. Such a group, though controlling the government by force of arms, could not possibly keep its national identity for very long, and with the adoption of luxurious ways, the fierce vigor of the invaders rapidly ebbed. Upon his conquest of Africa, Gaiseric had forcibly usurped all imperial authority, and under his despotic control the Vandal kingdom remained a great power in the western Mediterranean. But after the heroic founder had gone, his state weakened, and within a little more than half a century it had been utterly destroyed. The details of its constitution may therefore be passed over as a matter of relatively slight importance.

The  
Vandal  
kingdom  
in Africa

As far as the Saxon kingdoms are concerned, their definite history hardly begins before the introduction of Christianity in the seventh century. For the earlier period we have practically no records; we may be sure of only a few simple facts that may be deduced from the writings of a later day. By tradition there were three Germanic peoples who invaded the province: Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The last of these, we are told, settled in Kent, and that region long continued to have marked peculiarities of custom. Angles and Saxons, on the other hand, seem to have been much the same. It does not matter whether we say Angles (i.e., English) or Saxons or Anglo-Saxons. This latter term, however, is useful to distinguish the Saxons of Britain from the Saxons of the continent. And in referring to the language of the barbarian conquerors, one has to say Anglo-Saxon or Old English, for they did not speak what we know as English, but

The Saxon  
kingdoms  
in Britain

various dialects related to Low German. Knowledge of Latin in Britain virtually disappeared by the sixth century, and when it was reintroduced by Christian missionaries, it never entirely supplanted the vernacular even in formal documents. We thus find writings in Anglo-Saxon, transcribed in Latin characters, as early as the seventh century, when certain local kings began to record the customary law in statements known as dooms. From these sources may be drawn much interesting detail concerning Germanic law and institutions—a subject on which more will be said in the following pages.

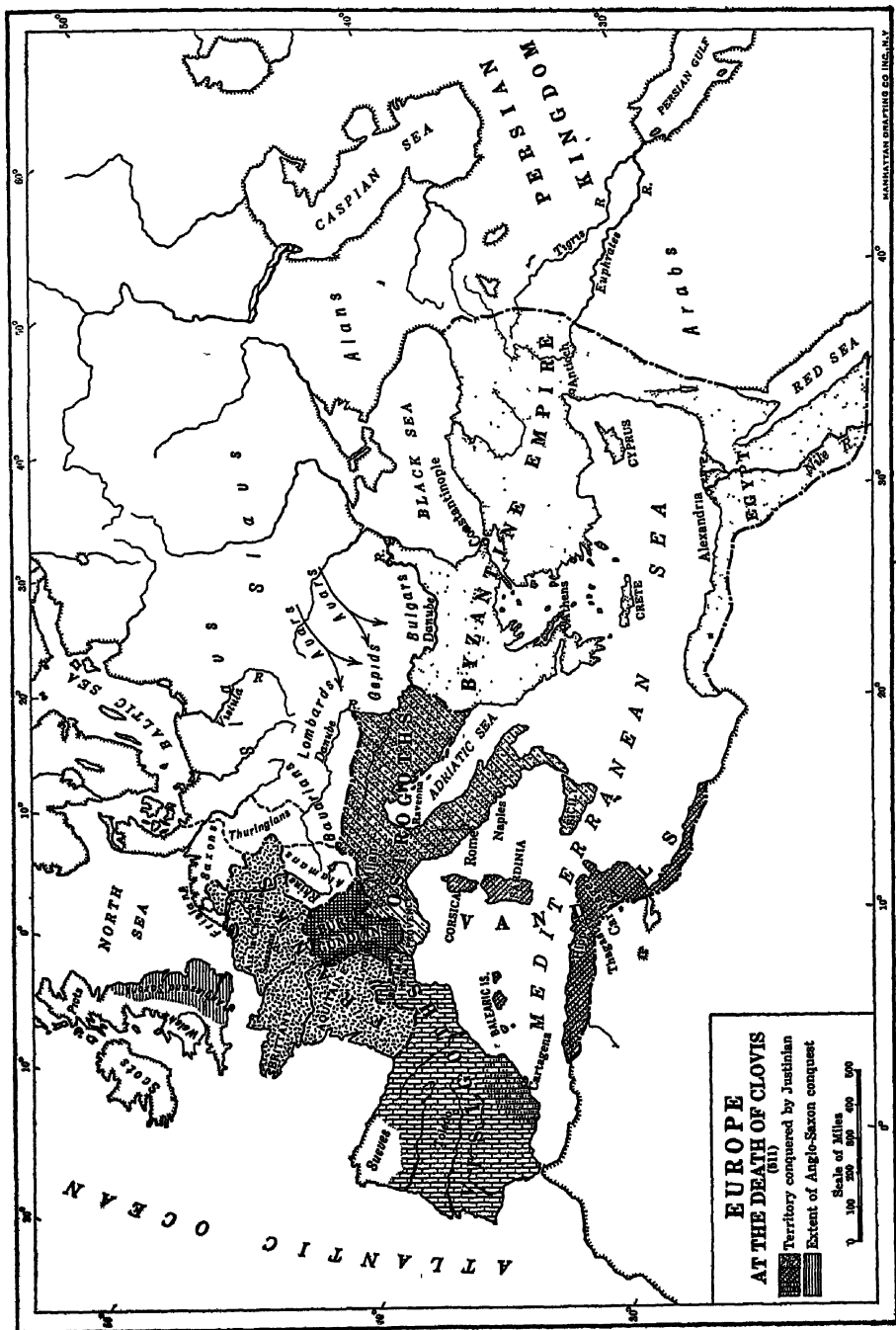
The Burgundians and the Franks in Gaul

In Gaul, as we have just seen, the Visigoths toward the later fifth century held the whole Mediterranean coast as far east as the Alps. To the north of Provence, meanwhile, the Burgundians had gradually built up a considerable kingdom, one of the most peaceable and the most thoroughly Romanized among the barbarian states. Settled as *fœderati* in the region about Geneva, the Burgundians had pushed their dominion into the valley of the Rhone to include the important city of Lyons—the country since known as Burgundy. Here their position was formally recognized by the emperor, toward whom—through fear of the Visigoths—they continued to be very respectful. And here they remained, protected by the rivalry of their neighbors until the sudden advance of the Franks broke the established balance and threw all Gaul into turmoil. For the early history of this famous people we are mainly dependent on Gregory of Tours, a famous bishop of the next century.<sup>8</sup> His account, of course, is largely based on tradition; but, while making due allowance for the author's easily recognized prejudices, we have every reason to believe in the essential truth of the story as he gives it.

The reign of Clovis (481-511)

In 481 a fifteen-year-old boy named Chlodowech—or, in modernized form, Clovis—became one among several kings of the Salian Franks. He was the son of Childeric and the grandson of Merowech, and from the latter is derived the name applied to the family—Merovingian. The little territory which he inherited was about the city of Tournai, for as yet the Salians had made no attempt to penetrate far into Gaul. To the east of them lived the Ripuarian Franks and the Alamans. Below the Loire lay the great kingdom of the Visigoths. But between the latter and the Frankish lands a Gallo-Roman adventurer named Sya-

<sup>8</sup> See below, pp. 158 ff.



grius maintained a sort of imperial governorship by means of a small mercenary army. Up to this point the Franks had seemed the least formidable of the barbarian peoples. Now, as if they had merely been waiting for an energetic leader, they rapidly became the dominant power in the west.

His conquest of northern Gaul

Of Clovis's character and motives we have no direct account, but his acts were eloquent. He must have been an ambitious man of tremendous personal force, combining audacity with shrewd calculation; and he certainly was unscrupulous. In 486, heading a coalition of all the Salian chiefs, Clovis fell upon Syagrius at Soissons, destroyed his army, and took over his dominions. Following up his victory, the Frank then extended his power—by just what steps we do not know—over a wide territory reaching west to Brittany, south to the Loire, and east to the Meuse. This success marked him as an important political figure. His sister was now married to Theodoric the Ostrogoth, and he himself secured as bride the Burgundian princess Clotilda, who, in spite of her Arian relatives, had become an orthodox Christian. But Clovis, according to Gregory of Tours, remained heathen until God had helped him, like another Constantine, to win a battle over the Alamans in 496. However that may be, Clovis did intervene in a war between the Riparian Franks and the Alamans, with the result that the latter were crushed. While the fragments of their nation secured new lands in Rhætia from the Ostrogothic king, Clovis took possession of their former holdings on the Rhine.

His conversion to orthodox Christianity

About the same time Clovis was induced to accept orthodox Christianity. Many factors, apart from supernatural influences, helped to bring about the result, notably the urging of his wife and of the bishops throughout the Gallic provinces. Clovis, as a statesmanlike ruler, could readily perceive an enormous advantage in adopting the faith of the Roman world. All the important barbarian kings were Arians. Could he not, as champion of the true church, surpass them all? So he was baptized at Reims by the bishop Remigius who, says Gregory, admonished him in the famous words: "Meekly bow thy head, O proud Frank. Adore what thou hast burned; burn what thou hast adored." This was one of Europe's great events, for it led straight to the establishment of a Frankish empire in the west.)

Having disposed of the Alamans, Clovis turned to his other rivals in Gaul, the Burgundians and the Visigoths. The former

were beaten, but spared on condition that they should engage in a joint campaign against the Visigoths. The decisive battle was fought in 507 at Vouillé, near Poitiers, where Alaric II, the incompetent son of Euric, was slain. All his dominions north of the Pyrenees were being threatened by the allies when Theodoric, whose warnings had been left unheeded, intervened to check the Frankish advance. Provence he occupied and kept for himself; the coast to the west, Septimania, he restored to the Visigoths. Clovis meanwhile took the rest of Aquitaine; and at Tours, in 508, he enjoyed the honor of wearing a purple robe sent him by the emperor, along with a privilege making him honorary consul. Although he was now "Roman" as well as Christian, he remained at heart the same old barbarian. Gregory tells how, by treachery and assassination, Clovis disposed of the other Salian kings; how he instigated the murder of the Riparian king by the latter's son; how he then sent messengers who, by a clever trick, slew the son; and how he acquired all the Frankish territory. "For daily," remarks the pious Gregory, "the Lord laid his enemies low under his hand and increased his kingdom, because he walked before Him with an upright heart, and did that which was pleasing in His sight."

His conquests in southern Gaul and among the Franks

To Clovis likewise we owe the remarkable document known as the *Salic Law*—a sort of code which he issued somewhere toward the end of his reign. The *Edict of Theodoric*, as we have seen, was principally derived from the Roman law; so was the collection made by the Visigothic king, Alaric II, and that by the Burgundian king, Gundobad. To a large degree, in fact, they were adaptations of the Theodosian Code, to govern cases affecting the Roman population. If the barbarian subjects of these kings were still tried according to Germanic custom, the latter was not considered worthy of formal statement. Clovis's compilation, on the other hand, reflected the institutions of the Franks themselves, and for that reason is of extraordinary interest to the historian. Among the Franks, as among the Anglo-Saxons and other Germanic peoples, law was essentially popular custom. It was not created by royal legislation; the duty of the king was merely to enforce it. For this purpose he appointed officials to preside over courts where decisions were made by the assembled freemen of the district.

The *Salic Law*

For his share in the administration of justice, the king received a portion of all sums collected from convicted persons,

but as yet the concept of crime had hardly emerged. Homicide, assault, theft, and other misdeeds were considered offenses against the individual and his kindred. If they were not compensated, they were entitled to secure revenge by prosecuting the blood feud. The *Salic Law*, like the Anglo-Saxon dooms, therefore consists largely in elaborate tariffs of charges made for all sorts of injuries. Their minute distinctions of penalty introduce us to the habits and prejudices of a primitive folk. Among the Franks, for example, to call a man a fox or a hare was an affront punishable by fine; to say that a man had thrown away his shield—a reminiscence of Tacitus—was as serious as to strike him with the fist. From the list of sums paid for manslaughter—generally known as *werelds*—we furthermore obtain valuable information concerning social classes. The sum paid for a free Frank was tripled if the person were in the king's service. This is clear evidence of a nobility based on the advancing power of the monarchy. And by the same test we may distinguish various groups of semi-free peasants between the warrior class and that of the slaves proper.

Germanic  
trials

Trials, according to Germanic law, were extremely formalistic. First of all, the plaintiff had to summon the defendant and see that he appeared. Then a formal accusation was made by repeating a solemn oath, and the court decided how the accused should clear himself. Occasionally a man of high reputation would be allowed to do so merely by swearing that he was innocent; an ordinary person would normally have to bring a stated number of oath-helpers—men who would swear with him that he was innocent. This process, called compurgation, did not require the production of any evidence. The oath was a sort of test by which, in theory, God would not allow the guilty to escape. So any failure to repeat the right words, any hesitation, or any stuttering cost the defendant his case.

As a further example of primitive formalism may be cited the custom of the *chrenecruda* reported in the *Salic Law*:

If any one shall have killed a man, and having given up all his property, shall not have enough to fulfil the requirement of the law, he shall present twelve oath-helpers to swear that, neither above the earth nor under it, has he any more property than he has already given. Then he shall go into his house and shall gather in his hand dust from its four corners; and then he shall stand upon the threshold, looking toward the interior, and then shall throw over his

shoulder some of that dust upon the nearest relative that he has. . . . And then in his shirt, without girdle and without shoes, and with a staff in his hand, he shall jump over his hedge.

By this procedure his nearest relative, or other persons thus designated, became obligated to pay the remainder of the *wergeld* that was owed. Such were the legal usages that throughout a large portion of the western provinces came to supersede the ancient and dignified law of Rome.

At this point the account of the Germans in the empire must be broken off in order to examine other significant developments. If the period just reviewed seems no more than a wild confusion of disconnected happenings, that is inevitable. The history of Rome in the fifth century is, by itself, almost as meaningless as a nightmare. Of what was to emerge from that chaos no one at the time could have had the slightest inkling. The historian, wise after the event, can point to certain institutions as destined to survive. Of outstanding importance among them were the Christian Church, the Frankish monarchy, and the imperial government at Constantinople. But the great Roman Empire was a thing of the past. The fate of the European world was thenceforth to lie with the barbarian peoples.



Territorial  
organiza-  
tion

tion on a territorial basis modeled on that of the empire. In the earlier period the Christians of each city formed a relatively small community. At the head of it was a bishop, assisted in matters of worship by a group of priests; in matters of administration by a group of deacons. Yet the bishop remained in close touch with his congregation; and when he died, his place was filled by a somewhat informal election, for the person to receive consecration was designated by the faithful over whom he was to preside. Later, when the whole Roman world had been officially Christianized, the government of the church inevitably became more complex and more rigidly defined. The unit of episcopal administration remained the Roman *civitas*, eventually called the diocese. In each important city there was one and only one bishop, whose church was the cathedral.<sup>1</sup> The diocese was then subdivided into parishes, both urban and rural, each of which was intrusted to a priest named by the bishop. The deacons came to have important functions in connection with the mass and other services of the church, while routine work was passed on to a greatly increased staff of subordinates. As the episcopal office rose to greater prominence in society and politics, it became a prize to be secured through influential patrons, or even to be fought over by rival factions. Consequently, although we still hear of episcopal elections in which popular acclaim was the decisive factor, the choice of a bishop was gradually taken over by the clergy of the diocese, and little was left to the populace but a sort of confirmatory applause to mark the end of the proceedings.

The  
relative  
rank of  
bishops

In both civil and ecclesiastical administration a number of *civitates* were combined to form a province, within each of which one city served as the metropolis. The bishop of such a city was styled the archbishop or metropolitan, and to him was normally given the right of consecrating all bishops within his jurisdiction. So far there was general agreement; but with regard to the higher ranks there were many causes of dispute. If the imperial system of government were applied in its entirety to the church, there would have to be prelates corresponding to the vicars and prefects. And would not the ultimate authority then be shared by the bishops of Rome and of Constantinople? As a matter of fact, the analogy was pushed to the extent of allowing

<sup>1</sup> From *cathedra*, the episcopal chair. The bishop's diocese is also called his *see*—from *sedes*, seat.

certain bishops the title of primate or of patriarch, and the bishops of the two great capitals were exalted above all others. Nevertheless, a rigorous hierarchy of ecclesiastical offices exactly corresponding to that of the state was never established. Although the influence of such an ideal was clearly perceptible in some quarters, it was offset from an early time by a factor of a totally different sort. This was the matter of apostolic foundation.

If the authority of the bishop and the authority of Scripture were alike based on tradition, and that tradition was considered essentially apostolic, a church that could point to an apostle as its founder would inevitably be regarded with peculiar veneration. In the east there were a number of such churches, but only those of Alexandria and Antioch—cities of outstanding political importance—were mentioned in the canons of Nicæa as holding, along with Rome, special powers by virtue of ancient custom. Some writers were inclined to add Jerusalem, but in that city there had really been no continuity of Christian organization. The old Jerusalem had been destroyed by Titus; the Jerusalem of subsequent centuries was a new settlement founded by Hadrian. In the west, at any rate, there was no ground for controversy. By the test either of apostolic foundation or of civil preeminence, Rome stood alone.

The early history of the Christian community in the capital remains very obscure. According to a tradition which even Protestant scholars are today inclined to accept, both St. Peter and St. Paul, were martyred at Rome, and the church there has always claimed the former of those apostles as its founder. The bishop of Rome, or pope, as he came to be known, has thus been distinguished as the successor of St. Peter and, on the basis of that succession, has proclaimed the doctrine of the Petrine supremacy. In the Gospel of Matthew occur the famous words of Christ:

The theory  
of the  
Petrine  
supremacy

And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter,<sup>2</sup> and upon this rock<sup>2</sup> I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

<sup>2</sup> In Aramaic, the vernacular of Palestine, both words are *Caïpha*. This has been called the greatest pun in history. It is partially kept in Greek and Latin by *Petros(us)* and *petra*. *Matthew*, xvi, 18-19.

So the apostles, according to the Roman view, were not endowed with equal powers but were placed under the headship of Peter—a headship which inevitably made the church a papal monarchy.

Pope  
Damasus I  
(366-84)

To state this theory was of course one matter; to enforce it, quite another. For the first two Christian centuries the known history of the papacy is little more than the names of the bishops, and the oldest assertion of their primacy in the church comes not from them, but from others. It is only after the time of Constantine that certain popes begin to emerge from the sources as distinct individuals. Damasus, as far as we know, was the first to describe the Roman church as the Apostolic See—a phrase that was to serve as the keynote of his entire pontificate. In rapid succession he promulgated a positive statement of the Petrine supremacy, a digest of Roman belief and discipline, and what was henceforth to be the official canon of the New Testament. And it was Damasus who encouraged the eminent scholar Jerome<sup>3</sup> to revise the Latin translation of the Bible. The papal exposition of the orthodox faith was accepted in both east and west and had the active support of the emperor Theodosius. But the general council which he called at Constantinople in 381 flatly contradicted the Roman claim that ecclesiastical authority was solely a matter of apostolic tradition. By declaring that Constantinople was the second see of Christendom because it was the new Rome, it implied that Rome was the first see merely because it was the older capital. Thus two irreconcilable views were brought into conflict, and although as yet both parties worked together in apparent harmony, the groundwork was laid for serious controversy in the following centuries.

Ecclesi-  
astical  
issues of  
the fifth  
century

The policy of the emperors was obviously opposed to the establishment of an ecclesiastical monarchy except one reserved to themselves. As long as Rome remained the chief city of a prince who considered himself divinely appointed to control both church and state, the Roman bishop could hardly be more than a prominent subordinate—as, in fact, the patriarch of Constantinople continued to be in relation to the emperor there. The clergy of the new Rome were only too willing to proclaim their see co-ordinate with that of the pope. Nor was it certain that such apostolic foundations as Alexandria and Antioch, or even such western churches as Carthage and Milan, would accede to the

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 99.

Roman program in its entirety. These issues could not be settled in a day or in a century; they were left to be determined by historical circumstance, which one may or may not read as the working out of divine providence. It is in any case amazing how the events of the succeeding age conspired to enhance the papal authority.

In the fifth century came the collapse of the empire in the west, which not only removed the emperor from Rome but gave the western provinces into the hands of heathen and Arians. The great Latin heritage—a tradition of law and order, of unity and civilization—fell to the church to maintain. And the voice of this church, in what seemed a time of universal ruin, was recognized as the voice of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, heard through the agency of the Roman pontiff. To the men of the west, at least, this appeared entirely fitting; for Rome, though bereft of an emperor, was still the imperial city. The leadership of the world was merely transferred from a temporal to a spiritual Cæsar. The state might perish, but the infallible church lived on. The barbarians might conquer the land, but might not the church conquer the barbarians? Perhaps, after all, their advent would not be found an unmitigated evil. Along with the last stubborn remnants of paganism, they destroyed the menace of local resistance to the Roman see. From the papal viewpoint the barbarian west was to prove more solidly Christian than the Greek east.

By the opening of the sixth century the church was assuredly confronted by a magnificent opportunity, which—it must be admitted—was admirably developed through the efficiency of the papal leadership. Not all the successors of Damasus were great men, but their average was high and they formed a brilliant contrast to the successors of Theodosius. Siricius deserves mention because he was the author of the first known papal decretals—formal letters embodying decisions on points of law and doctrine which had been submitted to Rome by other churches in the west. Under Innocent I there was a notable increase in such correspondence, and throughout it the pope never missed a chance of reiterating the Petrine claims. Yet in general the situation remained unchanged. While the empire was paralyzed by civil war and invasion, the three great sees of the east—Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople—were embroiled in a

Popes  
Siricius  
(384-99)  
and  
Innocent I  
(402-17)

series of theological controversies which owed much of their bitterness to political rivalry and personal animosity.

Pope Leo  
the Great  
(440-61)

Upon this troubled scene entered Pope Leo I, called the Great. Of his earlier career practically nothing is known except that he had long been identified with the Roman church and had proved his ability in the office of archdeacon—i.e., the deacon who acted as the bishop's right-hand man. As pope he created an inspiring ideal for all subsequent generations, an outstanding example of religious sincerity, moral force, eloquence, vigor, and practical sense. He was one of the great preachers of all time; from that day to this his sermons have been considered models of their kind. Leo also, like his predecessors, took an active part in the definition of the orthodox faith and the suppression of heresy. He exercised a now undisputed sovereignty over the local churches<sup>4</sup> in Africa and Spain, and in Gaul he victoriously opposed the effort of the archbishop of Arles to make himself independent. Meanwhile the east had once more been plunged into fanatical conflict over theology, and out of this confusion the statesmanship of Leo was able to win a signal triumph for the Roman see.

The First  
and  
Second  
Councils of  
Ephesus  
(431, 449)

In 431 a general council, called at Ephesus by Theodosius II, had condemned Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, for so far distinguishing the divine and human natures in Christ as to deny to the Virgin Mary the title, Mother of God. On this occasion Nestorius had been supported by Antioch and opposed by Alexandria. Eighteen years later the emperor was induced to summon a second council at Ephesus to deal with another phase of the same controversy. Now the positions were reversed: it was the Alexandrian party which was accused of heresy (called the monophysite doctrine)—holding that Christ had really possessed only one nature, the divine. Leo, carefully watching the course of events, protested that no council was necessary because the pope was thoroughly competent to settle the matter alone; but since the emperor decided against him, he prepared and dispatched by deputies a summary statement or "tome" to explain the doctrinal points at issue. In the west Valentinian III, of course, could not be expected to do anything, and in the east Theodosius II obtained little but ill repute through what Leo was to brand as his Robber Council. The assembly was packed by Dioscurus, the Alexandrian bishop, and Leo's tome was not allowed even to be read. By threats and violence a majority of the bishops were terrorized into condemning all the leaders of

the opposition, and the single papal delegate who had spoken in the meeting was forced to flee after registering a formal protest against the whole proceeding.

The result of this scandalous affair was that Leo now received urgent and remarkably humble appeals from Constantinople and Antioch. As the recognized champion of justice and orthodoxy, he denounced the action taken at Ephesus and took vigorous steps to rehabilitate the men who had there been condemned. Theodosius did not move, but his successor, Marcian, clearly saw that to leave matters as they were would hopelessly discredit the imperial government and its policy of controlling the church through representative assemblies. So in 451 he called a new council to meet at Chalcedon, where a special deputation of imperial ministers would see to the maintenance of law and propriety. The Council of Chalcedon, the largest assemblage of the sort that had been held, at once revoked the decrees of the Robber Council, reinstated its victims, and deprived Dioscurus of his see. Then the bishops proceeded to take up the problem of doctrine, and after mature deliberation approved the tome of Leo, which was made the basis of an official creed affirming the combination in Christ of two perfect natures, both the human and the divine. Up to this point the council had merely carried out the papal program; toward the end of the session, however, it adopted a canon reaffirming the one promulgated at Constantinople in 381. As, it was stated, Rome had secured high ecclesiastical privilege because it was the imperial city, so the new Rome was accorded equal privilege and should enjoy precedence second only to that of the ancient capital.

The  
Council of  
Chalcedon  
(451)

Beginning in harmony between east and west, the council thus ended by assuring their disagreement; for Leo, of course, registered determined protest against any such depreciation of the Apostolic See, and until his death in 461 labored to secure the rejection of the offensive canon. His effort was in vain, and his successors had to be content with the victory won by his policy in other respects. To many, indeed, the recognition already given to the papal demands seemed altogether excessive. Nestorians and monophysites still flourished in many quarters despite the ban of the empire, and from time to time determined attempts were made to reverse the decrees of Chalcedon. Finally the emperor Zeno sought to obtain religious peace with a theological statement of his own, which instead brought papal excommunica-

Causes of  
schism  
between  
east and  
west

tion<sup>4</sup> upon himself as well as the patriarch of Constantinople. Leo, of course, did not live to see this eventuality, but he unquestionably would have approved it, as every staunch upholder of the Petrine supremacy was bound to do. The Greeks continued to be fascinated by metaphysical controversy and refused to abandon it at the behest of the more practically minded Latins. That difference was ineradicable. And by the close of the fifth century the political divergence of east and west was equally sharp: the former remained subject to an imperial government, while the latter fell into the hands of barbarian adventurers.

Leo the  
Great in  
legend

Although Leo could not realize the fact, the destiny of his church lay with these barbarians; along with them it was to mold a new and glorious western world. So it came about that in legend Leo's greatest achievement was his miraculous repulse of Attila from the gates of Rome. As a matter of cold history, we cannot say just how the Roman delegation, of which Leo was one member, accomplished its object. There was, however, a certain poetic justice in making the great pope, backed by the portentous figure of St. Peter, the heroic defender of Italy against the foul Hun. Like other legends, this one had an element of truth—the strength of Leo's moral leadership in an age of ruin and disillusionment.

## 2. THE REGULAR CLERGY

Mysticism  
and  
asceticism

In general we may say that religion in all ages and climes has carried with it a certain element of mysticism—an unending search for hidden truth through some form of supernatural revelation. In this search men have very generally believed that they have been aided by asceticism—by denying themselves lawful pleasures or by inflicting upon themselves unnecessary hardships. Among the commonest of ascetic practices have been fasting; prolonged prayer at the expense of sleep; the renunciation of luxurious habits, including soft beds and bathing; the wearing of uncomfortable clothes, such as hair shirts; and celibacy. On certain particular occasions the church required all Christians to observe a stricter discipline than was normal—as, for example, on

<sup>4</sup> In the broadest sense of the term, excommunication meant separation from the Christian communion—a sort of spiritual outlawry which, since it involved exclusion from the sacraments, carried the threat of damnation. Throughout the entire mediæval period it was the principal weapon used by bishops to enforce their decrees. When two bishops denied each other's authority by mutual excommunication, the result was a schism.

Fridays and during Lent they should abstain from eating meat. The ordained clergy were held to a still more rigorous standard. The priest, as the shepherd of the flock, should set a good example by his holy life. Many things permitted the laymen, notably warfare, were forbidden him; and, at least in the west, he was not supposed to marry.

After all, however, the mystic devotions and ascetic exercises of the secular clergy were necessarily restricted by their calling, which was to live in the world (*sæcula*) and perform the work of the church among the people. To many this seemed inadequate for their personal needs. They felt that, to assure salvation, they must escape from the world and give themselves utterly to religion. So, in mediæval usage, "the religious" was a term applied specially to monks—also called the regular clergy because they came to live according to a rule (*regula*). Yet originally, as the word literally implies, the monk was a hermit who submitted to no discipline except such as he chose to establish for himself. Retreating into solitude, he found a cave, or built a cell, where he could devote himself to the attainment of merit through continual worship and the mortification of the flesh. For sustenance he relied upon the offerings of the faithful, who thereby secured the blessing of his prayers. The Christian hermit was thus a variety of the oriental holy man, throughout countless centuries a very familiar figure in connection with many Asiatic mysteries. The life is relatively easy in a warm dry climate, such as that of Syria or Egypt, and it was in the latter country that the first noteworthy development of Christian monasticism took place during the fourth century.

The  
secular  
and the  
regular  
clergy

In this connection the first great name is that of St. Anthony of Egypt. After fifteen years of ascetic life on the outskirts of his native town, he retreated to a lonely spot in the desert and there spent twenty years as a hermit. Gaining a great reputation for sanctity, he was imitated by a host of others and, at their request (about 305), he finally established for them a sort of common discipline. But the Antonian system, which henceforth prevailed in Lower Egypt, prescribed no real community life. Each hermit occupied his own isolated cell and there devoted himself to whatever practices he liked, meeting with the others for church services only on Saturdays and Sundays. Accordingly, it was left for St. Pachomius, about ten years later, to draw up the first true monastic rule. Beginning his religious

St.  
Anthony  
and St.  
Pachomius



career as a hermit, he was eventually led to found a series of religious communities. Although the members still occupied separate dwellings, they employed their time according to a definite plan in divine worship, the reading of the Scriptures, and manual labor. By the close of the fourth century, we are told, there were no less than seven thousand Pachomian monks in Upper Egypt, and a similar system had been applied to several colonies of nuns.

St. Basil

The next great step in monastic evolution was made in the last quarter of the fourth century by St. Basil, a Greek of Pontus. After studying the customs of the Egyptian hermits, he rejected them for his country and substituted what we still know as a monastery—a house where the monks all live together, sharing common quarters and participating in the same routine existence. Under the Basilian rule no trace remained of individualism in worship or discipline; the monk found each day taken up with a prescribed order of activity, which left nothing to personal caprice. The principal objective was, of course, divine worship; but the many services were interspersed with hard work, which Basil thought preferable to exaggerated asceticism.

St. Simeon  
Stylites  
(d. 459)

This system of monastic life proved very popular and rapidly spread throughout the Hellenized regions of Asia and Europe, and thence among the Slavic peoples. Egypt, however, remained loyal to its own traditions, and in Syria hermits and extremists of all sorts continued to enjoy great renown. Among them one of the most distinguished was St. Simeon Stylites. Having been ejected from a monastery because of his refusal to be satisfied with ordinary austerities, he took up his abode on top of a pillar just wide enough to lie on. There he lived without descending for thirty years, and in the course of that time increased the height of his perch from six to sixty feet, getting needed supplies by lowering a basket on the end of a rope. Under the force of his example, pillar saints for a while tended to spring up in large numbers, but the vogue was restricted to Syria.

Monasti-  
cism in  
the west

In the west, meanwhile, monasticism had apparently been introduced as a novelty from Egypt. By the close of the fourth century it became increasingly common for persons of good birth, both men and women, to renounce the world and adopt some form of ascetic life. Hermits appeared on all sides, and there were also many religious communities of the Pachomian type. The monasteries of Tours and Lérins in Gaul were especially

famous in the fifth century, and from there similar institutions were carried to Ireland by the famous St. Patrick, of whom more will be heard in the following pages. In spite of this early zeal, however, Egyptian monasticism won no lasting success in the west. Many of its practices were there rendered impossible by the more rigorous winter climate, and, more generally, its demands proved excessive to the Latin temperament, which had always been revolted by the vagaries of oriental mystics. Consequently, it was not until the system had been adapted to the new environment that it became a dominant force in European history. This was the work of the illustrious St. Benedict of Nursia, who thereby earned a place among the great reformers of all time.

Benedict, we are told by Pope Gregory I,<sup>5</sup> was born of a noble family in the Roman municipality of Nursia and, like other youths of his class, was sent to be educated at Rome. There he quickly became disgusted with the vicious life of the fashionable world and decided to become a hermit. For a number of years he lived in a solitary cave overlooking the valley of Subiaco, being scantily fed by a friend in a nearby monastery. As the fame of his holiness spread abroad, disciples thronged to the vicinity, and Benedict soon found himself the spiritual director of a large community. Then came persecution from various rival establishments devoted to a laxer code of morals; so, about the year 520, Benedict led a band of his most ardent followers to a new abode on the summit of a commanding hill called Monte Cassino. There, within the next few years, he composed the famous rule that was to dominate the religious life of the west. It has often been held that this rule was drawn up primarily for the group of monks at Monte Cassino, but careful analysis of Benedict's language proves that from the outset he contemplated a reformed discipline for monasteries generally. Indeed, any one who reads the rule may readily perceive that it takes for granted the ideals of monasticism and restricts its emphasis to the means by which they are best to be attained. The keynote is practicality.

He is, says Benedict in his prologue, "about to institute a school for the service of God," in which he hopes "nothing harsh or burdensome will be ordained." In some respects it may seem a bit severe, but so it must be in order to "amend vice and pre-

St. Benedict of Nursia  
(c. 480-  
c. 550)

The purpose of his rule

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 168.

serve charity." And at the end he warns the reader not to be satisfied with what he has just perused. To mount the "lofty heights of doctrine and virtue," he should study the Scriptures and the works of the holy fathers; what Benedict has composed is "merely a little rule for beginners." His discipline applies only to cenobites, "the best kind of monks"—those who live together as a religious community. After long training in the monastery one may safely become a hermit; without this experience Benedict considers the solitary life dangerous. There can be no true holiness without law; the man who shuts himself up without a shepherd is in his own fold, not the Lord's.

The Ben-  
edictine  
vows

(Anyone who desires to be admitted to the community must first serve for a considerable time as a novice, and so prove his determination and sincerity. Finally, after his fitness to enter has been demonstrated, he is to sign a solemn vow in writing of "stability, proper monastic conduct, and obedience"—that he adopts the religious life and will remain steadfast in observing its demands, and will in all ways submit to the authority of the abbot, the elected head of the monastery. The monk, of course, abandons all worldly connections: he can have no family ties; he gives up his name, his rank, and his property. Benedict takes for granted his perpetual chastity, but specifically insists on his absolute poverty.)

No one, without leave of the abbot, shall presume to give, or receive, or keep as his own anything whatever: neither book, nor tablets, nor pen—nothing at all. For monks are men who can claim no dominion even over their own bodies or wills. All that is necessary they may expect from the father of the monastery; and they shall keep nothing which the abbot has not given or allowed. All things are to be common to all.

The abbot

Under such circumstances, the responsibility of the abbot is a very heavy one; he is answerable to God not merely for his own acts, but for those of his subordinates. In his keeping are the souls of the brethren, as well as their bodies, the house which they inhabit, and everything of which they enjoy the use. Before deciding any weighty matter he must call the monks together for consultation; then, after hearing their advice, he must do whatever he considers right, acting always "in the fear of God and according to the Rule." Within the monastery he shall make no distinction of persons, whether freeborn or servile, except as

one or another may excel in humility and good works. According to the capacities and deserts of the brothers, he shall fill all offices in the monastery, apportion all routine work, and assign special tasks as the need for them may arise. He enforces the prescribed monastic discipline; yet, doing so, he is allowed wide discretionary powers in almost every particular. So it is not surprising that Benedict recurs again and again to the supreme importance of the abbot's character. When a vacancy occurs, the monks shall elect one distinguished for virtue and wisdom, "even if [by order of seniority] he be the last in the community."

As to the daily life of the monastery, Benedict established a régime which—compared with the prevalent Egyptian system—was eminently moderate and sensible. Divine worship, which he calls "the work of God," is the chief duty of the brotherhood, and is to include principally the chanting of psalms, reading from the Scriptures, and prayer. There are to be eight regular services, or "offices," beginning with matins at the "eighth hour of the night,"<sup>6</sup> followed by lauds at daybreak, and ending with compline at dusk, so that the brothers may retire without the aid of artificial light. This arrangement would allow an unbroken sleep of somewhat over eight hours in the winter. Since in the summer it would be less, compensation is made by a siesta after the mid-day meal. The monks are to sleep in their clothes—the regular tunic and cowl, bound at the waist with a cord—but each is to have a bed in the common dormitory, together with a mattress, a blanket, and a pillow.

The daily routine

Although opportunity is given the individual for prayer, reading, and contemplation, most of his day, outside the four or five hours of religious service, is taken up with manual labor; for "idleness," says Benedict, "is the enemy of the soul." In the summer the brothers are to begin whatever work is assigned them shortly after sunrise and are to continue until the fourth hour; then they are to engage in reading until the sixth hour (about noon), when they have their first meal. Afterwards, they are to rest in silence on their beds for somewhat over two hours, when the afternoon office is sung and all return to work until evensong, followed by supper, the final office, and bed at dark. In the winter, when everybody would rise later, reading

Manual labor and other tasks

<sup>6</sup> The Romans, like the Greeks, reckoned twelve hours of day, from sunrise to sunset, and twelve hours of night, from sunset to sunrise. So their hour was a variable quantity, depending in length upon the season of the year.

is placed first on the schedule, then labor until dinner, which is had at the ninth hour and is again followed by reading. Sunday normally is to be a day of rest and meditation; yet even then, if any brother is unable or unwilling to occupy his time profitably, he may be set to work.

By estimate, therefore, Benedict prescribes six to seven hours of daily labor—at least twice the time allotted to study. The abbot, however, is to moderate this routine for the benefit of the aged and infirm, and there are many tasks to be assigned besides agriculture—such as cooking and serving at table, care of the buildings and of all the monastic property, various skilled crafts, the copying of manuscripts and other clerical work, and the teaching of younger monks and of boys sent to be educated. Occasionally there may be missions outside the monastery, but no brother is to set foot beyond its precincts without the specific authorization of the abbot. Lastly, certain monks shall be appointed to look after any guests who may arrive, for hospitality is enjoined by Benedict as a sacred obligation. Every one who comes, whether rich or destitute, is to be received in love and humility as if he were Christ Himself.

Food and  
drink

Although the Benedictine rule prescribes fasting until noon or later, it normally allows two meals a day. At each meal there are to be two cooked dishes, besides green vegetables and fruit; and each brother shall daily receive a pound of bread. The eating of meat, like bathing, is generally forbidden, except in the case of invalids. Benedict, however, is generous in the matter of drink. He admits that wine has by some been declared improper for monks; but in his day, he says, "they cannot be persuaded of this." So he permits a pint of wine to each monk daily, with an extra allowance because of specially hard work or hot weather. While deploring drunkenness and gluttony, Benedict does not discourage hearty eating. And it should be remembered that, by his definition, meat is only the flesh of four-footed beasts.

This was and is Benedictine monasticism. Its direct influence on the religious life of Europe was incalculable, for it set a new and eminently practical standard of discipline not only for monks, but also—with certain modifications—for nuns. And its more indirect contributions to the civilization of Europe were equally remarkable. Since, within fifty years after Benedict's death, his system was officially adopted by the Roman church, its fur-

ther progress will be considered in connection with the history of the papacy.

### 3. THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

As the empire lapsed into chaos, the Roman educational system, which had long ceased to have any contact with the actualities of existence, continued on its course unperturbed. For centuries the mark of the gentleman had been his training in rhetoric—his ability to compose and pronounce declamations on conventional subjects in a conventional way. According to the accepted standard, the truly cultured should never by any chance be interested in practical questions, should never say anything simply and directly. Themes had to be drawn from classical sources; argument had to proceed by the weaving together of literary allusions; the style had to be elevated, intricate, and ornate. The more difficult it was to understand what the author was driving at, the more necessary it was for the refined audience to applaud the product; and the narrower the group that could play the game according to the rules, the greater the distinction of belonging to it. Such was the circle of elegant conversationalists pictured for us in the pages of Macrobius (d. 423), and still reflected in the letters of Apollinaris Sidonius (d. 488) while the Goths were completing their conquest of southern Gaul.

The  
Roman  
rhetorical  
education

Under such circumstances, little could be expected of Latin literature in the fourth and fifth centuries. Although there were many writings, they all suffered from the blight of artificial rhetoric. The best historian of the age was Ammianus Marcellinus, who endeavored to continue the work of Tacitus down through his own lifetime, writing in all thirty books, of which only the last seventeen are extant. As a literary artist, Ammianus was a very inferior imitator of Tacitus; yet we are grateful to him for his straightforward account of the events leading up to the battle of Adrianople, where his narrative ends. The compositions of Symmachus, regarded by contemporaries as a peerless stylist, now seem a wearisome mass of turgid phrases, quite empty of meaning. Much the same criticism can be made of Ausonius, whose poetry, while occasionally giving us a valuable glimpse of the author's native Gaul, can be read only at the expense of appalling fatigue. Claudian is better. He at least knew how to compose musical verse in the true classical manner—enough to mark him as a genius in that age—but his subjects were un-

Latin  
letters in  
the fourth  
and fifth  
centuries

worthy. Adulation of such men as Honorius and Stilicho cannot be great literature.

Famous  
textbook  
writers

Of more lasting influence were the compilers. Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (early fifth century) consecrated for the Middle Ages the notion of the seven liberal arts, of which we shall subsequently hear much. Priscian's *Institutes of Grammar* (late fifth century) remained the standard text in that field for many centuries.<sup>7</sup> And the works of Boëthius were of supreme importance for the history of education in Europe. As already noted, that distinguished man, after long enjoying the favor of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, was finally executed on a charge of treason in 524. While in prison he composed the enormously popular *Consolation of Philosophy*—an allegorical *mélange* of verse and prose which, strangely enough, includes no word of Christianity. For this reason the mediæval tradition that made the author a holy martyr has become somewhat discredited. Yet, pagan or not, Boëthius performed a memorable service for western Christians when he translated into Latin certain of Aristotle's works on logic, as well as Porphyry's *Isagoge*, a manual on the same subject. These books, together with the editor's own essays on the mathematical sciences, were to provide the most advanced education that the schools of the Dark Age knew.

The intel-  
lectual  
dominance  
of the  
church

In this connection we encounter one of the dominating facts for the cultural history of the whole succeeding period—that by the sixth century Greek learning had virtually disappeared in the west. In the east the Latin tradition of Constantine remained strong until after the reign of Justinian; then it rapidly faded, making one half of the Roman Empire a land utterly foreign to the rest. This is another fact of epoch-making significance. A third is that, with the ultimate failure of the Roman state and the establishment of barbarian dominion in the western provinces, education there became essentially the monopoly of the church. Such men as those mentioned above still maintained the tradition of pagan letters, but they had no successors. The intellectual leadership of their world had already passed to the great ecclesiastical writers, whose works, though not always elegant, had the surpassing merit of being vibrant with life.

<sup>7</sup> It was rivaled by the *Grammatical Art* of Donatus, a writer of the fourth century.

Until the later fourth century the outstanding exponents of Christian thought were mainly Greeks. The first important Latin author to devote himself to the defense of the church was Tertullian in the time of the Severi. A prolific and eloquent writer, he undertook the refutation of many heresies, only himself to fall under the ban of the orthodox for upholding an ultra-rigorous standard of Christian discipline. Although Lactantius, who flourished about a hundred years later, is famous for the perfection of his Latin style, he fell short of greatness through ignorance of the theology which he tried to discuss. Meanwhile, of course, the west had produced many worthy and heroic bishops but none of such commanding stature as Athanasius, the author of the Nicene Creed. Then, on the eve of the barbarian invasions, emerged three illustrious men: Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. They, together with Pope Gregory the Great, are called the four Doctors (that is to say, teachers) of Latin Christendom.

The Latin  
church  
fathers

Ambrose (Ambrosius), destined to be the ideal bishop of the western world, was born about 340 of an eminent Roman family that had long been devoted to Christianity. His father was no less a person than the prefect of Gaul, one of the four highest officials in the state. So the young Ambrose was naturally given the finest education available in the capital—Greek as well as Latin. Finally, having spent a number of years in the study of law, he entered the imperial service and was named by Valentinian I as a provincial governor with headquarters in Milan, which normally was also the residence of the emperor. At that time the bishop of the city was an Arian. When he died in 374, there was general rejoicing among the orthodox, mingled with forebodings as to the coming election; for the situation was such as might easily lead to bloody conflict. On the appointed day, therefore, Ambrose came in his official capacity to the cathedral, where were assembled in one part the clergy and in another the laity. During the proceedings, when the people had already been excited by rumors of impending strife, a child's voice—says the attractive story—cried, "Ambrose bishop!" And the entire multitude, as if by heavenly inspiration, united in acclaiming their gifted young president. Ambrose protested his incompetence; following a practice of postponement that was then common, he had never even received baptism. But the demands of the clergy and people bore him down. The emperor declared the choice a

St.  
Ambrose  
(d. 397)



good one, and Ambrose was consecrated, having been baptized and pushed through all the holy orders in the course of eight days.

As would be expected of a man with his background and training, Ambrose was essentially the type of ecclesiastical statesman—a leader and a man of action. Although he conscientiously devoted himself to the theological studies which he had hitherto neglected, he was never a scholar. Aside from official correspondence, his writings were restricted to practical essays on religion. Yet as bishop his literary attainments stood him in good stead. His knowledge of Greek was of great advantage in his dealings with the eastern clergy, and his oratorical training helped to make him a magnificent preacher. He took an active part in the suppression of heresy and paganism, and in the stimulation of zeal for a truly Christian life, in place of the merely formal acceptance which was then so widespread in fashionable circles. Through his sermons, we are told, hundreds of men and women were inspired to renounce the world and adopt the garb of ascetics. Ambrose, however, remains chiefly famous for his rôle of spiritual adviser to princes. Having his see at Milan, he had first Valentinian and then Gratian as a parishioner. And it was the latter who began the long series of acts that made Christianity the sole lawful religion of the empire.

Theodosius, who continued and completed the work of Gratian, remained under the direct influence of Ambrose. In this connection the bishop's crowning victory—and it was one on which later generations loved to dilate—came in the year 390. A riot at Thessalonica had greatly incensed the emperor who, unmindful of ecclesiastical advice, ordered his troops to make an example of the city. The result was an unbridled slaughter that filled Ambrose with horror. So, when Theodosius returned to Milan, the bishop refused to perform divine service in his presence, and, upbraiding the emperor in a straightforward letter, demanded that he publicly show contrition for his sin. Theodosius, seized with remorse, yielded; as a humble penitent he appeared in the cathedral before the assembled court and made submission to God. Thus the lesson was driven home for all to understand, that even Augustus was only human and therefore subject to the authority of the church. Nothing could have better proved the idealism and moral courage of the great Milanese bishop.

In Jerome (Hieronymus) we encounter an entirely different

## THE CHURCH IN THE FIFTH CENTURY 99

sort of person—one of the few men canonized<sup>8</sup> by the church for purely scholarly endeavors. Coming to Rome from his native Dalmatia, he received the ordinary rhetorical education and, like so many of his contemporaries, found the charms of pagan literature well-nigh irresistible; for although a Christian, he seems at first not to have taken the faith very seriously. Later, as the result of an illness and what he accepted as a miraculous vision, he abandoned his sinful passion for Ciceronian Latin and vowed exclusive devotion to the church. For a number of years he lived as a hermit in Syria, spending part of his time in the study of Hebrew. In 379 he was ordained priest at Antioch, but three years later he was brought to Rome by Pope Damasus, throughout whose pontificate he served as papal secretary. Then, on the accession of Siricius, Jerome again turned eastward, and, after extensive travels in Palestine and Egypt, settled in a monastery at Bethlehem, where he died in 420. St. Jerome  
(d. 420)

During all these years Jerome had constantly engaged in literary work, and his output was truly prodigious. He was a great letter-writer, giving us in his correspondence vivid information concerning all the great religious problems of the age and their bearing upon the daily life of particular men and women. He was an enthusiastic advocate of asceticism, and on that score became embroiled in bitter feuds with the friends and relatives of his converts. Jerome, in fact, loved controversy. On every disputed question pamphlets streamed from his pen, wherein appeals to reason were richly interlarded with personal invective. Much of his writing, therefore, was marred by haste and violence. Yet, in spite of these defects, Jerome produced many scholarly books—among them some remarkable investigations of Christian archæology. And it was this interest in antiquities that led him to make his numerous translations from the Greek and the Hebrew, including his famous Latin version of the Bible.

Various translations of the Scriptures already existed in the west, but they were known to be corrupt and defective. So Damasus intrusted to Jerome the task of a complete revision. For the New Testament he naturally employed Greek manuscripts, and this portion was soon completed. The Old Testament caused him much more trouble; for he realized the impor-

The  
Vulgate

<sup>8</sup>That is to say, recognized as a saint, an exceptionally holy person deserving special honor. From the fourth century on, the practice of addressing prayers to a saint for his aid in securing divine grace became increasingly common.

tance of using the Hebrew Bible in preference to the Greek Septuagint,<sup>9</sup> and he was not proficient enough in the former language to proceed without assistance. Consequently, it was not until after Jerome had taken up his residence in Palestine that, with the help of learned Jews, he was able to complete his undertaking. The result of his labors was the Latin text of the Scriptures which, with the addition of certain translations from the Septuagint, was made official in the western church and eventually became known as the Vulgate. Thus Jerome played an important part in the work to which the papacy was then devoting its chief attention—the definition of Christian doctrine and the establishment of a practical organization through which it could be made effective.

St.  
Augustine  
of Hippo  
(354-430)

Almost exactly contemporary with Jerome was the famous African bishop, Aurelius Augustinus, one of the greatest ecclesiastics and one of the most interesting men in history. Augustine, as he is now known, was born at Thagaste in Numidia just after the middle of the fourth century. His father, Patricius, was a member of the local *curia* and a pagan. On the other hand, his mother, Monnica, was a Christian, and through her influence the boy was brought up in the faith and early designated as a catechumen, i.e., a candidate for baptism. But for Augustine, as for so many at that time, the ceremony was long postponed, and in the meantime he drifted further and further from the church. As preparation for the legal profession, he received a good education in Latin grammar and rhetoric. Greek was already tending to disappear from the African schools, and Augustine, to his later regret, learned very little of it. Then, at the age of eighteen, he went to Carthage to complete his training. By this time his father was dead, and as yet his mother seems to have had but limited influence over him. From the first he had been passionately fond of classic literature and he now found fresh delight in the moral philosophy of Cicero. Dropping legal study, he became a teacher of rhetoric.

His  
*Confessions*  
(c. 397)

In his world-famous *Confessions*, written long afterwards, he bitterly deplores this whole period in his life. He recounts with horror the sins of his youth: stealing food from his parents' cellar, cheating in boyish games, and weeping over tragic scenes in Vergil! He dwells with loathing on his love of the theatre,

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 40.

his "damnable and vainglorious" pride in rhetorical skill and profane wisdom. He describes his lustful character and tells how he eventually formed an irregular union with a woman, presumably of low birth, who shared his life for a dozen years and bore him a son. But worst of all, he says, was his abandonment of Christianity for Manichæism. This step, it would appear from his own story, was due to intellectual curiosity; he was possessed by a craving for certainty in religion—for something which his mind could grasp. The Christian Scriptures repelled him because of their literary form; they were so childlike that he could not perceive their profound meaning, and, instead of positive answers to the questions that haunted him, they presented a mystery.

The Manichæans, on the other hand, promised him complete knowledge. From Persia they had taken the dualistic system of theology and ethics, which has already been noted in connection with the cult of Mithras, and combined with it a pseudo-scientific explanation of the universe well calculated to attract a youth ignorant of Greek scholarship. And from the Gnostics<sup>10</sup> had been adopted the flattering distinction of the elect, who by means of a higher discipline attained to perfect truth, from ordinary followers called auditors. Manichæism in the fourth century was a flourishing religion; its devotees at Rome were praised by Jerome for an austerity of life superior to that of most Christians. Augustine, however, found in it only disillusionment. The elect, he reports, were not always as pure as they were supposed to be, and the greatest of the Manichæan bishops had no answers to satisfy the inquiring convert. He therefore abandoned the sect and, in default of anything better, went back to a half-hearted connection with the Christian Church.

Mani-  
chæism

Meanwhile Augustine had gone to Rome to open a private school. He had not been there long when he heard that Milan needed a teacher of rhetoric. He entered the competition and secured the appointment. About the year 384, he thus came to live in the city of Bishop Ambrose. Here he was joined by his mother, and here he fought out the spiritual battle that was to make him a Christian saint. Augustine felt himself torn between conflicting desires. Taking up the project of marriage and a public career, he went so far as to put away the mother

Augustine's  
conversion  
(386)

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 39.

of his son and to betroth himself to a young girl of wealth. But all the while he was being drawn away from that prospect by a religious urge which utterly defied reason. Now for the first time he read the works of the Neo-Platonists and through them was finally enabled to discard the Manichæan dualism. The philosophy of Plotinus, which he did not distinguish from that of Plato, charmed him; yet it fell short of the certitude that he demanded. At the same time he came under the influence of Ambrose, from whose sermons he discovered that the Old Testament was to be understood through symbolic interpretation, and that the true meaning of the New Testament was in harmony with Platonism. In Paul, especially, Augustine found a kindred spirit. The great apostle, too, had suffered under the dominion of the world and the flesh; had been oppressed by a sense of ineradicable sin; had failed to find a cure in erudition.

Then came the final impulse. A compatriot, who had long been a Christian, was surprised at Augustine's newborn interest in Paul's epistles and so was led to tell the story of St. Anthony: how he had been converted through a text of Scripture, and how his example was being followed by hundreds of persons, not only in Egypt, but in Gaul and Italy. Augustine, who had never heard of monasticism before, was deeply impressed. Here were uneducated men gaining the spiritual peace which he, with all his learning, had sought in vain. Taking refuge in the garden, he threw himself under a tree and gave way to a passion of tears. And in the midst of his emotional outburst he heard the voice of a neighbor's child, chanting, as if in some game, "Take up and read! Take up and read!" To Augustine it seemed a message from heaven. Going back to the house and opening the book of Paul's letters, he saw this passage:<sup>11</sup>

Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Augustine had received his answer. Abandoning his profession, together with his contemplated marriage, he received baptism, and thenceforth devoted himself to the service of the church. On the death of his mother, who had lived to rejoice at her son's conversion, he returned to Thagaste, where he made his family home into a monastery. Here he spent a number of

<sup>11</sup> *Romans*, xiii, 13-14.

years, writing the first of a long series of books against the enemies of the Christian faith. It was not until 391, while visiting the bishop of Hippo, that he was persuaded to accept ordination. Becoming the bishop's assistant, he eventually succeeded to the episcopal office and held it for the remainder of his life. He died in 430 during the siege of Hippo by the Vandals—on the eve of disasters that were to begin the destruction of Roman culture in Africa.

Augustine's fame depends, not upon his career as a bishop, but rather upon his intellectual dominance over succeeding generations. The essence of this dominance lay in the fact that he perfectly expressed what was to be the attitude of mediæval scholarship—rationalism subordinated to mystic faith. That is why the details of his early life are of such profound significance for the history of Europe. In a previous age a talented youth like Augustine would naturally have followed in the train of Cicero and Seneca. Some of his contemporaries were still trying to do so, but they were inferiors; the best minds of the day were being attracted to an ecclesiastical career. Thus the schools lost a fine student of antiquity in Jerome, and the state a great ruler in Ambrose. Is it any wonder how the church rose from the ruins of the empire?

Augustine's *City of God*

To estimate Augustine's importance in Christian thought would be to write a volume on the entire subject. He left his mark on virtually every great problem that has remained to vex the theologian—especially on such subjects as the origin of evil, predestination, divine grace, human will, and the nature of salvation. From time to time in the following pages we shall have to turn back to Augustinian doctrine; for the present it must suffice to give a brief résumé of the *Civitas Dei*. This work has enjoyed high renown ever since it was first published, and is generally regarded as Augustine's masterpiece. In the eyes of the modern reader it suffers from two main defects: having been composed by a very busy man, it is rambling and repetitious; furthermore, it is written in the verbose and turgid style dear to the African rhetorician. Nevertheless, its underlying plan is of epic grandeur, and in spite of much argument which seems puerile to the historian of today, it is throughout inspired by a deep and impressive sincerity.

To refute the current allegation that the sack of Rome in 410 was due to the desertion of the ancient gods, Augustine begins

with a sketch of Rome and its religion. He endeavors to show that the pagan deities had never brought their adherents any real benefits, and that the recent troubles of the empire were no more than what the Romans deserved for their sins. This part of the book, it must be admitted, could hardly have seemed very convincing except to one who already shared the author's ardent beliefs. Beginning with the eleventh book, however, Augustine comes to a subject more congenial to his talent. After all, the fortunes of persons and the fate of empires are but episodes in the scheme of divine providence. Of more fundamental significance than the history of Rome is the history of humanity, but that cannot be understood apart from the design of the Creator. The City of Man is imperfect and temporary; the City of God is perfect and everlasting. So in magnificent perspective Augustine depicts God and the angels, Satan and the demons, the creation of the world, the fall of Adam and its consequences for mankind, human history under the Old Dispensation, the coming of Christ and the nature of His redemption, the church and the sacraments, the last judgment, the end of the world, and the perpetual triumph of God's City.

With a few bold strokes Augustine thus sketched a stupendous picture, embracing all that men knew or could hope to know. There were numerous pagans willing to dispute his statements, but none able to captivate men's imagination with a work of equal magnitude and glory. Many centuries were to elapse before the appearance of any Christian scholar competent to fill in the details of his outline.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

#### I. JUSTINIAN

AT THE opening of the sixth century the office of emperor was still essentially what it had been in the days of Constantine —the absolute control of the state based upon the supreme command of the army. From time to time the prestige of a great ruler had secured the throne for a number of his descendants, but no dynasty had lasted long enough to establish the principle of strict hereditary succession. Sooner or later the right of designating the man to wear the purple had reverted to the army and the senate, which at Constantinople continued to uphold traditions brought from the ancient capital. Another such occasion arose in the year 518, on the unexpected death of Anastasius, the mediocre successor of Zeno. After the usual mist of intrigue had cleared away, the fortunate candidate was found to be Justin, commander of the palace guard. An Illyrian peasant by birth, he had—like so many of his compatriots—enlisted in the imperial army. There he had risen through sheer ability to attain one high honor after another. Now, at the age of sixty-six or thereabouts, he was crowned emperor, and he was still illiterate!

Justin I  
(518-27)

Justin, however, had an able assistant in his nephew and adopted son, Justinian, who long before had been brought from his native village to Constantinople and given a splendid education. Justinian was by this time about thirty-five and had already proved his intelligence and political shrewdness. Under his aged uncle Justinian thus became the dominant force in the state. He was made *patricius* and master of troops; finally, a short time before Justin's death in 527, he was associated in the supreme power. And since he lived to the ripe old age of eighty-three, the empire was subject to his direction for almost half a century. To contemporaries Justinian's character was a matter of violent controversy, and so it has remained to subsequent writers. Not a few of our perplexities in this connection are due to the historian Procopius. He was a lawyer, evidently steeped in classical literature, who for a time held a staff appointment with one of Justinian's armies, and who apparently continued to be in close

Justinian  
and the  
historian  
Procopius



touch with politics at Constantinople. He produced three important works. First he wrote seven books on the *History of the Wars*, a judicious account of Justinian's great campaigns, in which he avoided bestowing on the emperor either praise or blame. Then he composed, as a supplement to remain unpublished until after his death, the *Secret History*, in which he depicted Justinian as a devil incarnate whose every act was inspired by positive delight in evil. But his last volume, a description of the emperor's buildings, went to the other extreme and lauded Justinian's deeds without stint or scruple. These estimates defy reconciliation; and if we turn to official documents, we encounter the usual trouble of distinguishing the prince's own ideas from those of his clerks and advisers.

Nevertheless, while admitting that Justinian's character must continue to be a matter of dispute, we can hardly examine his acts without becoming convinced that they were chiefly governed by a magnificent ambition of restoring the empire. Justinian was obviously inspired by Roman ideals. Since he was an Illyrian, his native speech was Latin, and under him Latin remained the official language of law and government. He dreamed of reestablishing imperial rule in the west—a Roman rather than a Greek project. Together with political unification, Justinian wanted ecclesiastical unification, for he was devoted to the tradition of Constantine and sought to rule the church as well as the state. Nor was this policy merely that of the practical statesman; as a fervent Christian, he took a deep personal interest in theology. In some ways he was a great man; in others, a very foolish one. Much of his success, perhaps, he owed to his dauntless and talented wife, Theodora.

The  
Empress  
Theodora

This famous lady, according to the *Secret History*, was the daughter of an animal-trainer at the circus, an actress of singular beauty and depravity, who had already lived with various men before she met the future emperor. For these scandals of her early life we are entirely dependent on Procopius, and his malicious gossip may well be taken with extreme caution. Yet it does appear that Theodora was a girl of low birth and dubious reputation, with whom Justinian became infatuated long before he entered upon his glorious career. That, as heir to the throne, he insisted on making her his lawful wife is wholly to his credit. And even their bitter enemies admitted that, as emperor and empress, they set a shining example of mutual fidelity. Until her

death in 548 Theodora enjoyed unrivaled ascendancy at court; through her husband's indulgence she even found it possible to intervene in diplomacy and administration. Being assigned lands and revenues to manage as she pleased, she was assured of economic independence—a position which enabled her to maintain an extraordinary freedom of action. Many persons complained of her passion for display, of her unscrupulous ambition and capricious favoritism. In general, however, she used her power wisely and deserved the position of equality formally accorded her by the emperor. Without her moral support it is quite possible that Justinian would never have attained great eminence.

On one occasion, at any rate, we are told that Theodora's courage alone prevented the reign from coming to an untimely end. This was during the famous Nika Revolt of 532. The affair began as a riot in the hippodrome, which was often the scene of tumults over political and religious questions. But on the present occasion the disturbance went much further. Widespread economic distress had filled the capital with desperate men from the provinces, and the court had its usual complement of malcontents and would-be usurpers. For three days mobs ran wild through the city, a large part of which was destroyed by fire. A rival emperor was proclaimed and Justinian was besieged in his palace. Utterly dismayed, he was about to accept the advice of his ministers and attempt escape by sea, when Theodora threw aside all convention and spoke her mind to the council. It was impossible, she said, for a man to avoid death at some time. For one who had worn a crown was not exile a worse prospect? Flight was easy; Cæsar might go when he chose. As for herself, she hoped never to see the day when she would no longer be greeted as empress. She held to the old saying, that the purple makes a fine winding sheet! So the emperor and his generals took heart. New measures were adopted, the rising was put down, and Justinian was saved to perform great deeds.

The Nika  
Revolt  
(532)

His military policy can be very briefly stated: it was defensive in the east and offensive in the west. On two occasions war broke out with Persia; but Justinian did his best to minimize the quarrel and was ultimately glad to buy peace in Asia at the cost of an annual tribute, disguised as a subsidy for the protection of Roman territory. This was a distinctly unsatisfactory settlement which invited grave trouble for the future. In the Balkans, too, signs

Justinian's  
military  
policy

of approaching danger were at the time unheeded. From across the Danube the scourge of nomad raids was almost continuous; for as the best troops were diverted elsewhere, that frontier was left in a chronically weakened state. Elaborate fortifications, treaties of alliance, and payment of blackmail were together no more than a makeshift protection. Justinian's eyes were fixed on the western provinces, and to secure them he had to neglect what he already possessed. When we consider the meager resources at his disposal, his conquests seem truly marvelous.

The entire armed strength of the empire under Justinian has been estimated at 120,000 men; but the field army dispatched on a single campaign rarely numbered more than 25,000, and was often less. The troops were of course mercenaries—a mixture of recruits from all the more backward provinces and of barbarians from all the imperial borderlands. Such a force was Roman only in that it served a Roman government. For offense the chief reliance was now placed in heavy cavalry equipped with bow and arrows, as well as with sword and lance, and protected by defensive armor of iron. A well-disciplined body of this kind, though small, was able to ride through any ordinary host of that day. Its weakness lay in the treacherous and rapacious character of its members. Justinian was fortunate in having generals who were both capable and loyal.

The  
situation  
in the  
west

From the outset, furthermore, the imperial cause was enormously aided by the disunion and incompetence of its opponents. By the time of Justinian there were four important barbarian states in the west—those of the Ostrogoths, the Franks, the Visigoths, and the Vandals—and none of them was in the hands of a truly great king. In Italy Theodoric had died in 526, leaving his authority to be exercised by a daughter who acted as regent for her young son. In Gaul the kingdom of Clovis had been divided among his sons, of whom three were still alive in 527—energetic men, but somewhat distracted by family feuds. And in spite of their earlier fame, neither the Visigoths in Spain nor the Vandals in Africa were now formidable. Broken by the Franks, the former had for many years owed their security to an Ostrogothic protectorate. The Vandals, sadly decayed since the time of their invasion, lacked even the prospect of outside assistance.

Accordingly, as Justinian surveyed the lands held by what he termed barbarian tyrants, he might well decide that Africa of-

ferred the best opportunity for reconquest and would in turn constitute a good base for further operations. All that he needed was a pretext for intervention, and this was supplied in 531, when appeals came to him against the usurping king, Gelimer. By 533 the first of the Persian wars had been brought to a close and the Nika Insurrection had been suppressed; so Belisarius, who had distinguished himself in both affairs, was placed in command of an expedition to Africa. The force given him was only about 16,000, but Gelimer's stupidity made the Roman success relatively easy. Instead of concentrating against the imperial transports, which were protected by a very doubtful navy, he diverted the Vandal fleet to put down a rising in Sardinia, and Belisarius was permitted to disembark his army without opposition. Once on land, the Roman general proved invincible. A first battle led to the capture of Carthage, a second to that of Gelimer himself. In less than six months the proud kingdom of Gaiseric was wiped out, and the Vandal nation thenceforth disappeared from the pages of history.

The  
reconquest  
of Africa  
(533-34)

While Belisarius was enjoying a well-earned triumph at Constantinople, Justinian decreed the reestablishment in Africa of the Roman provincial administration. The announcement was premature, for the defeat of the Vandals was the signal for a widespread revolt of the Moors—the Berber population of the desert borders who wanted no foreign dominion of any kind. Thus the pacification of Africa was delayed for over a dozen years, and even then the Roman position remained precarious. The Moorish resistance continued and in the following century, as will be seen, was used to good advantage by the Mohammedans. In the meantime, however, Justinian had turned to his second great project, the recovery of Italy. Once more an excuse for Roman conquest was opportunely provided—this time by the murder of the Ostrogothic regent. Before the end of the year 535, Belisarius with a small force occupied Sicily. Thence, while his colleagues were conquering Dalmatia, he proceeded in 536 to invade Italy, taking Naples and Rome without a battle. Justinian had rightly gauged the incapacity of the usurping king, but had left out of account the warlike temper of his followers. Deposing their chieftain, they raised in his place a good soldier, who held out against Belisarius, now reinforced by a second army, until 540. Justinian, thinking the war ended, recalled Belisarius and turned to the civil organization of his recovered

The  
reconquest  
of Italy  
(535-53)

territory. Again he underestimated the strength of the opposition.

Within another year the Goths had found a heroic leader in Totila, who combined military genius with remarkable tact. By 544 he had regained most of the peninsula and forced the return of Belisarius. The latter, however, had wretched support from Justinian who, while finding his general indispensable, feared and distrusted him. Besides, the renewal of the Persian war and the continued disorders in Africa drained the resources of the empire and prevented the sending of an adequate force to Italy. Belisarius therefore could do little more than stand on the defensive; and in 548, at his own request, he was relieved of the command. For several years Totila was then left free to continue his victorious campaigns. Virtually all Italy fell into his hands, and by building a fleet he secured possession of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. At last Narses, another talented general, was sent with an army of unprecedented size, and he succeeded in gaining a decisive victory. After desperate fighting, Totila was slain in 552, and in the next year Narses destroyed the last remnants of the Gothic host.

The  
results of  
Justinian's  
conquests

For a time it seemed as if Justinian might be able to win a third great triumph in Spain, where a civil war between two rival kings led to imperial intervention in 554. Eventually, however, the Visigoths united against the invaders, who were able to secure only a portion of the southeastern coast. It, together with the Balearic Islands, was organized as another province, and Justinian could boast that the Mediterranean was once more a Roman lake. The total success of his imperial revival, brilliant as it was, should not be exaggerated. The regained territory in Africa did not extend all the way to the straits. The Visigoths still held most of Spain, as well as Septimania. Provence, which had belonged to the Ostrogothic kingdom, now fell into the hands of the Franks who, in spite of temporary alliances with the emperor, continued to act precisely as they pleased.<sup>1</sup> The Roman dominions included the islands of the Mediterranean, the peninsula of Italy, and the Dalmatian coast; but not the old provinces of Rhætia, Noricum, and Pannonia, which remained in the possession of Alamans, Bavarians, Lombards, and other barbarians.

<sup>1</sup> See below, ch. vii.

Even within this limited area the reconstituted empire of Justinian had no real vitality. That only the most tenuous of bonds held the outlying provinces to Constantinople was to be proved within a surprisingly short time. Long before Africa and Spain were reached by the Arab advance, Italy had in large part fallen to the Lombards, and Macedonia had been overrun by hordes of Slavs and Asiatics. How could a state unable to defend the Danube frontier dream of ruling the Mediterranean? Although we may admire the energy and determination displayed by Justinian in his devotion to an ancient ideal, the fact remains that he squandered precious resources on a lost cause. His project of political reunification was from the outset hopeless of real accomplishment, and the cost of his adventure was the exhaustion of his original empire.

Justinian, one of the world's greatest legislators, can hardly be accused of wanton misgovernment. Nevertheless, the mounting cost of his grandiose wars meant the continuance of extortionate taxes and official spoliation. To millions of his subjects the splendor of his reign proved to be no cause for rejoicing. And although the Roman conquest may have produced some benefits in Africa, it brought to Italy nothing short of ruin. The city of Rome, which had survived pillage by Goth and Vandal, was virtually destroyed by the frightful wars of the sixth century. Through five successive sieges the once glorious capital was reduced to a mass of wreckage. Under Justinian its time-honored privileges—notably the distribution of free grain—were not restored; the result was depopulation and increasing misery. Senate and consuls alike disappeared, and the only remaining municipal officials soon became papal subordinates. Nor was Rome the only one of the ancient cities to suffer. Henceforth urban civilization throughout the peninsula rapidly declined, leaving society to be dominated by the agrarian life of the countryside. This was the end of classic Italy.

The ruin  
of Italy

Justinian's ecclesiastical policy was even less successful. His aim, of course, was complete uniformity—the inclusion of all Roman subjects within one church dominated by himself. This naturally implied the rigorous suppression of pagans and heretics, in which connection Justinian not only confirmed the edicts of his predecessors, but excluded from the teaching profession all persons tainted with what he called Hellenism. The schools of Athens, with their illustrious history running back to the days of Plato,

Justinian's  
ecclesi-  
astical  
policy

were closed; at Constantinople and elsewhere the faculties of instructors were thoroughly purged of suspects. Although most Jews continued to enjoy a half-hearted toleration, they were excluded from all state service—as were likewise all persons who could not prove their entire orthodoxy. Heretics were deprived of civil rights and subjected to severe penalties. Manichæism<sup>2</sup> was punished with death.

In none of these matters was the opposition to the imperial administration strong enough to occasion serious trouble; but in connection with the monophysite doctrine,<sup>3</sup> condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, Justinian encountered a problem that defied all his attempts at solution. Arianism, as we have seen, was uprooted in the empire, only to spread throughout the Germanic world beyond the frontier, whence it was reintroduced into the west during the fifth century. In much the same way Nestorianism, driven from the Roman provinces, found a refuge in Persia. Thence it was widely extended in Asia by zealous missionaries and has persisted down to the present. The monophysite heresy was to prove even more stubborn because in that regard the imperial government was never able to carry out a consistent policy. Immediately on his accession, Justin had ended the schism with Rome by supporting the canons of Chalcedon. For a while Justinian maintained the same attitude—one dictated alike by his passionate orthodoxy and by his ambition to regain Italy.

Theodora, on the contrary, sympathized with the monophysites and used her influence to relax the official persecution. So the emperor swayed first one way and then the other. Ultimately his decision was largely controlled by the political situation. As soon as his armies had occupied Rome, he proclaimed a theological compromise and sought to force it upon all parties. One pope was deposed; his successor was taken to Constantinople and there compelled, in some measure, to accept the imperial dictum. A general council summoned to meet in the imperial presence also submitted. Justinian felt that he had won a complete victory; yet he had merely aggravated the trouble. The monophysites, instead of agreeing to the official program, were encouraged to establish a separate church, which still continues today.<sup>4</sup> And in the west

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> On this and the following subjects, see above, pp. 43, 86 f.

<sup>4</sup> It is commonly called the Jacobite church after its principal organizer, Jacob Baradaeus, bishop of Edessa in the sixth century.

the only effect of Justinian's despotism was to assure the permanent antagonism of the papacy and thereby to weaken the imperial hold on Italy. The logical reply to the reign of Justinian was the pontificate of Gregory the Great.

## 2. THE EAST AFTER JUSTINIAN

Justinian's death in 565 ended the last brilliant chapter in what can properly be called Roman history. The three emperors who succeeded him in the later sixth century were conscientious men of superior ability who remained loyal to his glorious tradition. Yet they had to abandon all thought of offensive warfare. Their energies were exhausted in a vain effort to defend the dominions inherited from Justinian. In the west Africa was successfully held because no formidable enemy appeared on that flank; but most of Italy was lost to the Lombards,<sup>5</sup> and the Visigoths soon reduced the imperial province in Spain to a few cities on the coast. In Asia the whole Roman position was again threatened by the Persians. To the north the Danube frontier was lost as the Balkans were swept by a fresh horde of nomads from the steppe. These were the Avars, whose drive into Europe was largely a repetition of the earlier attack by the Huns.

The coming of the Avars

In the fifth century the latter had imposed their dominion over a wide territory extending from the Caspian to the valleys of the Danube and the Rhine. This event tended to produce a huge shift of populations in Europe. The westward movement of the Germans was greatly accelerated and the lands which they evacuated were occupied by masses of Slavs, either on their own initiative or as serfs of the Asiatic conquerors. By the end of the fifth century, however, the Hunnic power had been broken and the territory once ruled by Attila was divided among a large number of barbarian princes. On the upper Danube were now the Alamans and the Bavarians. Below them two other important Germanic peoples were engaged in a bitter struggle for supremacy, the Lombards and the Gepids, who between them had conquered various lesser nations. The grasslands to the east were dominated by various groups of nomads, among whom the most prominent were known as Bulgars, presumably a remnant of the Huns reinforced by new arrivals from Asia.

<sup>5</sup> See below, ch. vii.



The Avars  
and the  
Slavs in  
the Balkan  
peninsula

Upon this conglomeration of peoples in the later sixth century fell the Avars, driven from their homelands by the encroaching power of the Turks.<sup>6</sup> Following the track of the Huns, the Avars subjugated the hordes of the Pontic steppe, and with them spread terror and destruction far to the north and west. By the later sixth century the Avar khan, Baian, ruled a vast tributary empire between the Black Sea and the Baltic. Like the Huns, the new conquerors formed a relatively small class, whose resources were chiefly obtained through merciless exploitation of the Slavic peasants. In tens of thousands the latter were driven into battle against the enemies of their masters or settled as enslaved colonists in subject territories. The details of this political upheaval are very imperfectly known, but there can be no doubt that it was one of the decisive events in the history of Europe. In particular, it began a new epoch for the Balkan peninsula.

Following a long-established precedent, Justinian had largely depended on barbarian *fœderati* for the defense of his northern frontier, and by the skillful distribution of subsidies he had been able throughout his reign to keep the Danubian provinces in a fairly peaceful condition. Among his most useful allies were the Lombards, whom he employed to hold back their fierce rivals, the Gepids. Under his successors this policy was reversed, with the consequence that the Lombards appealed for aid to the Avars. The latter proved to be terrible allies. The nation of Gepids was so completely destroyed that their name vanished from history. And shortly afterwards the Lombards, threatened by the same fate, moved westward into Italy, to bring a fresh series of calamities to that distracted country. Thus the Avars came to be solidly established in the old provinces of Dacia and Pannonia, whence the host at their command overflowed into Thrace, Macedonia, and Illyricum.

This was the situation at the opening of the seventh century, when Maurice, Justinian's third successor, resumed the offensive on the northern frontier. Thanks to a truce with Persia, he was able to make excellent progress, and by 602 the imperial forces were once more beyond the Danube. At this point he met disaster, not from the enemy, but at the hands of his own troops.

<sup>6</sup> A kindred nomadic people who then dominated the Asiatic plateau from the borders of China to those of Persia. Much more will be heard of them in subsequent pages.

Although he had earlier been faced by a serious mutiny in the east, the emperor now gave orders that the army, instead of returning to civilization, should spend the winter in the field. The command was the signal for another rebellion. Led by a brutal soldier named Phocas, the army occupied the capital, slew Maurice, and proclaimed its own commander—events which immediately plunged the empire into chaos. The government lost all hold on the provinces both east and west. While the Persians seized the opportunity to overrun Armenia and Syria, the Avars and their subjects obtained undisputed control over the interior of the Balkan peninsula.

During these crucial years the head of the provincial administration in Africa was Heraclius, who had risen from obscurity to a high post in the army under Maurice. Refusing from the first to recognize Phocas, he finally launched an expedition to depose the usurper and in charge of it placed his son, also named Heraclius. The latter enjoyed a brilliant success. Hailed at Constantinople as a liberator, he was carried to the throne by popular enthusiasm, and so given charge of an empire on the point of dissolution. Justinian, because his offensives—under charge of subordinates—ended in a dazzle of glory, has gone down in history as the last of the great Roman sovereigns. But why should Heraclius be forgotten? Engaged for thirty years in a heroic struggle against terrific odds, he won astonishing victories through sheer force of personal leadership. Although, by a tragic reversal of fortune, he finally met defeat, it was such as neither he nor any one else could have foreseen. To Heraclius is due the honor of saving all that was humanly possible to save of a doomed empire.

Heraclius  
(610-41)

For a dozen years after securing the crown, Heraclius was compelled to witness the continuous advance of his enemies on all sides. Spain, most of Italy, and the entire Danube valley had been irretrievably lost. Avars and Slavs roamed at will throughout the Balkans and penetrated far into the classic lands of Greece. It was now that the Long Walls, erected in the later fifth century to connect the Sea of Marmora with the Black Sea, stood the capital in good stead; but even they were not always successfully held against the barbarians. A ruse of the Avar khan during pretended negotiations for peace gave him possession of these outworks, and although the city itself was saved from surprise, the wealthy suburbs were almost totally destroyed.

Finally, in 619, Heraclius bought off the Avars at their own price and so obtained a short respite in which to concentrate his scanty resources against his principal foe, Persia.

The  
Persian  
advance

This great state had emerged in the third century through a victorious revolt against the Parthians. To a large degree the revolution was inspired by the traditions of the ancient Persian Empire which, after long dominating Greece, had fallen before Alexander the Great. On political grounds the Persian rulers were pledged to combat all Hellenic influence in the orient; and during the later period the cause was given a doubly sacred character by the anti-Christian agitation of the *magi*, the priests of the Zoroastrian religion.<sup>7</sup> Under such circumstances, peace between Persia and Rome could never be more than temporary; and, as we have seen, the emperors of the third and fourth centuries had been repeatedly called on for great defensive campaigns. Then had ensued a lull as the Persian energies were diverted against the Turks, and it was not until the reign of Justinian that the eastern menace again became grave. To have his hands free for his western offensives, that emperor bought off the Persians with subsidies; but they were stopped by his successor, and the war blazed out again, just as the exhaustion of the empire began to show itself in the weakening of its defense on all fronts.

The climax came with the usurpation of Phocas. After 602 the Asiatic provinces lay at the mercy of the Persians, who naturally refused the overtures of Heraclius. In rapid succession they took Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem. By 619 they had reached Chalcedon, across the strait from Constantinople, and had begun the reduction of Egypt. But the very magnitude of these calamities proved an advantage to Heraclius. Since the most sacred relic of Christendom, the Holy Cross at Jerusalem, had been carried off by the invader, the war for its recovery took on the aspect of a crusade. For once the tumultuous populace of Constantinople was united in a common cause. The churches donated their sacred vessels to be made into coin. And the emperor prepared himself by religious exercises to command in person a desperate expedition by which he vowed to win either victory or death.

In the spring of 622 Heraclius solemnly intrusted the defense of the capital to subordinates and, with the small army that he

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 20.

had been able to assemble, crossed over to the Asiatic shore. Other troops would have to be found on the way. So Heraclius, with amazing audacity, at once struck at Armenia, an excellent recruiting ground as well as a sympathetic Christian country. Besides, the move might divert the invading Persians from Syria and Egypt. Advancing from Nicomedia, Heraclius outflanked the enemy position in Asia Minor and by the end of 623 he had actually taken the capital of Persian Armenia. The next three years he spent in successful campaigns to prevent the junction of the various armies sent to dislodge him; then, in 627, he again took the offensive. Driving south from Armenia, he reached the Tigris at Nineveh and there won a victory just in time to glorify his celebration of the Christmas festival. Chosroës, the Persian king, fled to Ctesiphon, and Heraclius, after coming within a few miles of the city, decided not to risk an attack. While the mountain passes were still clear of snow, he made good a retreat to his base in Armenia.

The invasion of Persia by Heraclius (623-27)

No additional campaign was necessary. In the spring of 628 Heraclius received the glad news that Chosroës had been overthrown by a palace revolution and that the new king was willing to sign a treaty of peace. By the terms of the settlement thus made, the Persians evacuated all their conquests, reestablished the frontier as it had existed under Maurice, and restored the Holy Cross to Christian possession. Meanwhile Constantinople had bravely withstood a last terrific assault from the Avar khan. In 626 a barbarian host beset the city by sea and land, cooperating with a Persian army which advanced to the southern shore of the Bosphorus. But the day was saved by the imperial fleet, which destroyed the boats of the Avars and so prevented the union of the attacking forces. All attempts of the khan to storm the walls failed before the stubborn defense of the citizens. Discomfited, he finally withdrew his besieging hordes, and the Persians could do no more than follow his example. When, therefore, Heraclius returned in 629, bearing with him a fragment of the Cross as a sacred memorial of his triumph, the pæans of thanksgiving with which the capital resounded were entirely justified.

The siege of Constantinople by the Avars (626)

In five years, however, a new storm burst in Asia: the Arabs launched the tremendous drive that was to destroy the kingdom of Persia and (end the Roman dominion in Syria, Egypt, and Africa.) Up to this point, without regard to events in the west, the empire in the east had remained essentially as it was under

The  
passing  
of the  
Roman  
Empire

Constantine. Henceforth its efficient area was reduced to a portion of the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor—in reality a small Hellenistic kingdom built round the great capital, Constantinople. The southward advance of the Avars and Slavs had wiped out the Latin civilization of the Illyrian provinces—the homeland of Justinian—and removed from the later empire all but traces of Roman character. Accordingly, it has come to be known in history as the Byzantine Empire—an apt designation, since the well-spring of its life was the city originally called Byzantium.

### 3. BYZANTINE CULTURE

The devel-  
opment  
of the  
Roman  
law

Whatever judgment may be passed on Justinian's foreign policy, there can be no doubt of his greatness as a legislator. His codification of the Roman law ranks among the world's finest achievements in the realm of statesmanship—a verdict which is borne out by the fact that his compilation has been in continuous use since the day when it was first promulgated. Although the empire over which he ruled perished long ago, his *Corpus* lives on in states then undreamed of—not only in those of continental Europe and their colonies, but also in Scotland, Quebec, Louisiana, and the republics of Latin America. Later we shall have occasion to see how this came about; the present connection calls rather for a retrospect. Justinian's enactment was the culmination of a legal evolution extending over a thousand years. Originally, when Rome was a small city-state, the Roman law was properly that which applied merely to the narrow class of Roman citizens. It was an inflexible system pervaded by archaic custom. The rights which it protected were relatively few, and to take advantage of its protection, the individual had to follow a formalistic ritual filled with solemn declarations and symbolic acts. Such arrangements were very well for a conservative agricultural community; as Rome became the metropolis of the western Mediterranean, the courts inevitably developed new methods of administering justice. The ancient law of citizens (*ius civile*) was constantly supplemented from the law applied to non-Romans (*ius gentium*).

The latter, from the outset, was intensely practical, being formulated to govern the relations of men drawn from all countries by the lure of commercial opportunity. Thus it dealt primarily with contractual matters, such as sale, lease, partnership, loan, and pledge; but it also came to include many sensible innovations

*Ius Civile,*  
*Ius*  
*Gentium,*  
and *Ius*  
*Naturale*

with regard to marriage, testamentary succession, conveyance, and the like. This law was administered by a special prætor with jurisdiction over foreigners at Rome, and it became customary for each of these magistrates to issue an edict defining the particular rules that he intended to enforce. The prætors with jurisdiction over citizens likewise promulgated edicts, and in the course of time introduced into the *ius civile* many of the speedy and effective remedies that characterized the other system—a development that was greatly accelerated under the principate.

For a time the ancient methods of legislation by act of an assembly (*lex*) or of the senate (*senatus consultum*) still continued; but they gradually became obsolete as legislation took the form of imperial constitutions, technically classified as mandates, rescripts, edicts, and decrees. Inevitably, too, as the authority of the prince came to dominate that of the prætors, their power of modifying the law by proclamation was superseded. Under Hadrian the edicts of earlier magistrates were consolidated into one official document which could be amended by no one but the emperor. And during the same period the extension of Roman citizenship throughout the empire necessitated the removal from the civil law of its last archaic features and compelled its further adaptation to the needs of a cosmopolitan society. Educated Romans had long since fallen under the charm of the Stoic philosophy,<sup>8</sup> and in no respect was the influence of the latter more deeply significant than in the field of legal speculation. The Stoics taught that all men were brothers, being alike the sons of one Creator; that he had endowed them with common faculties and so given them a common responsibility to live according to reason—to observe the dictates of nature, which transcended all enactments by particular states. To the eyes of the Romans this natural law (*ius naturale*) inevitably suggested their own *ius gentium*, which was a body of equity based on the usages of many communities, and in the writings of the jurists the two concepts tended to be identified.

Jurisprudence—the study of the principles underlying the law—had come to attract many able men under the later republic. According to the normal practice of the Roman courts, the magistrate heard only the preliminaries of a suit; after the nature of the controversy had been made clear, it was turned over for settle-

The jurists

<sup>8</sup> See above, pp. 16 f.

ment to a judge (*iudex*) agreed on by the two parties. Such a person was an ordinary private citizen with no specialized legal training, who was supposed to determine the facts and then render a decision according to the law already stated by the magistrate. But cases continually arose where the application of established precedents was extremely difficult, and on such occasions the judge would call for the opinion of an expert—usually a man who had made a reputation as a teacher in a law school. Consequently the jurists came to exert increasing influence over the administration of justice, and in order to assure sound results, Augustus began the custom of naming certain scholars as official advisers to the courts. The scheme worked admirably, for, while avoiding the danger of visionary innovations, it allowed the constant improvement of the law through the inspiration of philosophic ideals. In the course of the next three centuries arose a series of eminent jurists—among them Julian, Pomponius, Gaius, Papinian, Ulpian, Paulus, and Modestinus—whose works have never ceased to affect human thought and institutions.

Justinian's  
legislation

With the reign of Diocletian, the Roman law entered the last stage of its development in ancient times. The emperor was now the only source of law; all republican forms and distinctions became obsolete. The long-established practice of adjudication through laymen advised by professional jurists was superseded by a thoroughly despotic system under which all judges were imperial officials. This change, another indication of Roman decadence, eventually led to the final unification of the law in one authoritative body. As may readily be imagined, the magistrates of the sixth century were quite incompetent for the task of research in Latin archives. Even if all the pertinent manuscripts were available, how many Greeks of that day would be able to read them? The decisions of the courts had to rest on two great series of monuments: the constitutions of the emperors and the writings of the jurists. The former, from time to time, had been gathered into collections—of which the most recent was the Theodosian Code—but they in turn had never been combined. And although judges were now forbidden to cite any books on jurisprudence except the classics of an earlier age, the latter constituted a huge library in themselves. To consolidate all this material in a single official publication was the undertaking which Justinian set himself to accomplish.

Almost immediately after his accession to the throne, Justinian appointed a commission of distinguished lawyers, under the presidency of Tribonian, to collect and edit the imperial constitutions. This project was carried through with amazing speed. In less than two years the new compilation had been drawn up and promulgated—the first edition of what is properly called the *Codex*. Some five years later a second edition was issued, and this is the volume that has come down to us. It includes 4652 constitutions, arranged according to subject matter in twelve books. Some hundreds of these acts were Justinian's own; the rest were those of his predecessors, often in abridged and revised form, which henceforth could be cited only as they appeared in the Code. But since the emperor continued to legislate on all sorts of matters, it was subsequently found convenient to add a supplement known as the *Novellæ*, or new constitutions.

The Code  
and the  
Novellæ

Meanwhile the commission had been enlarged and set upon the infinitely harder task of codifying the writings of the jurists. As a preliminary, the emperor rendered decisions on fifty disputed questions and the experts were then commanded to summarize the whole of Roman jurisprudence in fifty books. On each subject in turn they were to give the fullest and soundest opinions available, whenever possible preserving the language of the original. How many manuscripts the commissioners examined is not known, but their final compilation actually cited 1544 separate works by thirty-eight authors. The result of this enormous labor, known as the *Digesta* or *Pandectæ*, was published in 533 and, like the Code, was made legally binding on the courts, which were forbidden thenceforth to use the jurists except as they had been officially quoted. It was the preparation of the Digest, with the accompanying settlement of ancient controversies, that led to the revision of the Code. It also inspired the production of the *Instituta*, a textbook of first principles arranged according to the analytical plan adopted by Gaius in the second century.

The Digest  
and the  
Institutes

Code, Digest, and Institutes (the Novels were an unofficial appendix) made up the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. Within this collection it is not Justinian's Code that constitutes what we think of under that name, but his Digest. The Code resembles rather a present-day collection of revised statutes; however interesting it may be to the historian, the legislation that it contains has, of course, long been outmoded. On the other hand, the

The  
*Corpus*  
*Iuris*  
*Civilis*



Digest, being a systematic exposition of fundamentals, can never become obsolete as long as Roman law remains a living system. For the same reason the Institutes must continue indefinitely to serve as an introduction to the subject. From the lawyer's point of view it is therefore the two latter works that have always been especially valuable. Modern scholarship naturally prefers originals to any sort of compilation; but we may be sure that, were it not for the Digest, the writings of the jurists would in large part have perished. All learning was then threatening to disappear in the west, and only Greek learning was to persist in the east.

The  
failure  
of Latin  
in the east

By the time of Justinian, in fact, Latin was almost a dead language at Constantinople. The emperor's own Novels were issued in Greek, and before the end of the sixth century his great law books were commonly used only in Greek translation. Many Latin words and phrases—the ghost of a famous Roman tradition—long continued to be official in connection with Byzantine law, government, and military organization; but eventually they lost all meaning or were absorbed into Greek. In its spoken form, Greek had come to reflect the cosmopolitanism of the capital, becoming intermixed with Latin, oriental, and barbarian elements. Even the vernacular of the educated was no longer classic in vocabulary, syntax, or pronunciation. Nevertheless, it remained so close to the ancient language that the latter could be maintained inviolate in all formal literature. Accordingly, when the Byzantine gentleman addressed his employees, he spoke one form of Greek; while conversing at home, he used another; if he attempted refined composition, he had to employ still a third.

Byzantine  
education  
and  
literature

As was to be expected under such circumstances, literary education tended to become more and more artificial. The boy of good family continued to study grammar and rhetoric as it had been studied for centuries. He learned Homer and other poets by heart, and he gained an intimate knowledge of Herodotus, Thucydides, and the great orators—a pagan tradition which the church in the east never broke down. Although, with the passing of the ancient schools of philosophy, advanced education became more thoroughly Christian, Byzantine literature kept such an ardent attachment to classic forms that originality was discouraged. The multitude of authors were content with imitations, commentaries, or anthologies. Verse continued to be written in ancient meters

based on quantity. It was, however, inferior to the new Christian poetry which, being unbound by precedent, adopted the popular system of stressed syllables and rhyme. Greek prose, like the Latin prose of the late empire, chronically suffered from rhetorical over-adornment. In science, aside from a few practical inventions, no progress was made; the best scholars of the age did no more than read and reread the famous texts of an older generation. Yet good technical essays were written on law, administration, and military affairs. Some of the church fathers were masters of prose style as well as of theological controversy. And in historiography the successors of Procopius maintained a relatively high standard.

If we compare Byzantine learning and literature with what had preceded, it is at once apparent that the east suffered no such cultural decline as introduced the Dark Age in the west. The same truth emerges from a study of Byzantine architecture, which holds a recognized place among the world's greatest styles. Very remarkably, it owed almost nothing to the Greeks. Despite certain features borrowed from the orient, it was fundamentally Roman—a fact that further testifies to the strength of Latin tradition at Constantinople down through the reign of Justinian. As already remarked, the peculiar genius of the Romans made them superlative builders of utilitarian structures, which were generally characterized by employment of the arch. This element, of course, had been known for thousands of years, but hitherto it had never been developed into an architectural style.

Byzantine  
architec-  
ture

The fundamental principle may be very briefly stated: if placed on adequate piers, a semicircular arch of masonry, either stone or brick, will hold up a portion of wall twice as wide as the arch is high (see Figure 12). A single arch may be employed to provide a door, a window, or some other aperture; a series of arches may be raised to support an aqueduct, a bridge, or a much more elaborate superstructure. If extended, such an arch constitutes what is called a barrel (semi-cylindrical) vault. Continued in a circle, as if rotated on its axis, it forms a dome. And either vault or dome may be used as a roof. The principles of arched construction were thoroughly understood by the Romans; yet when they came to decorate their buildings they continued to be fascinated by Greek tradition, to which the arch was entirely foreign. In their finest works the Greeks had held to a system inherited

Roman  
and Greek  
construc-  
tion

from ancestors who had built only in wood—a system in which the central element is a horizontal slab supported by columns. When a series of such units are placed side by side, the result is a colonnade surmounted by an architrave. In the typical Greek temple the architrave bears a decorative frieze and a projecting cornice; and these three parts are together called the entablature (see Figure 1). Such members could of course be decorated in a variety of ways, and the different schemes of carving the capitals—the blocks placed on top of the columns—gave rise to the

three classic orders, known as Doric, Ionian, and Corinthian.

When the Romans built an aqueduct, they naturally made no attempt at adornment, leaving bare the simple row of piers and arches. But when the same method of construction was employed for a monument intended to be beautiful, they sought to embellish the exterior by framing the arches with quite unnecessary columns and entablatures superficially attached to the masonry walls. In the famous Colosseum, for example, the three tiers of arches are thus set off by the classic orders, one over the other—a characteristic

Byzantine  
construc-  
tion

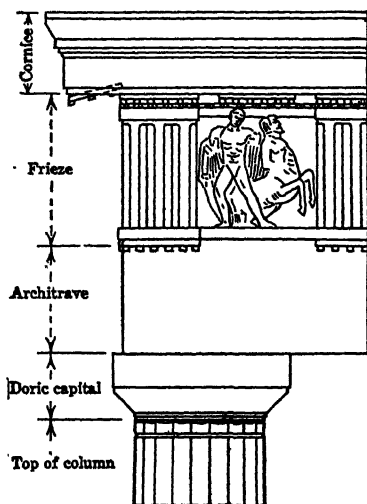


FIGURE 1.—GREEK ENTABLATURE.

bit of Roman ostentation never found in the works of ancient Greece (see Plate II). And this same obsession for pseudo-classic adornment led to even greater absurdities in such pretentious buildings as the baths of the later empire. It was not until the fourth century that architects, especially those in the east, began to free themselves from Greek tradition and to make their arches spring directly from supporting columns—a practice that in turn necessitated other changes (see Plate IV—San-t'Apollinare). Columns, when they were designed for the new purpose instead of being filched from pagan temples, became heavier. Capitals, to suit their new environment, were carved in unconventional designs, thus clearing the way for later experimentation in decorative sculpture.

These innovations coincided with an increasing use of the dome, an architectural fashion which seems to have been spread through Syrian influence. At Rome the Pantheon had long before been covered with a dome, but since the building was itself round, the construction offered no great difficulty. The hard problem was to adapt the dome for employment on a rectangular building like a fifth-century church. In Syria this had been crudely accomplished by placing slabs of stone across the angles of a square aperture to form an octagon, from which the hemispherical dome was raised. The first artistic solution was invented by the Byzantine architects. It is known as a dome on pendentives<sup>9</sup> and cannot be clearly understood without the aid of a diagram (see Figure 2). The preliminary step is to design a dome touching the four corners of the square to be covered, and then to trim it off perpendicularly where it extends beyond the four sides of the square. The remaining portion will be an imperfect dome such as was actually placed over Galla Placidia's tomb at Ravenna. The final step is to cut off the top of this first dome at the height of the arched openings on each side, and to construct the real dome over the circle thus provided.

The dome  
on pen-  
dentes

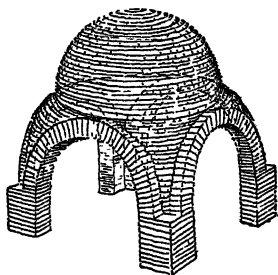


FIGURE 2.—DOME ON PENDENTIVES.

It was fitting that this great structural achievement should have been first accomplished in the magnificent church of St. Sophia (see Plate II), erected by Justinian to replace an older edifice burned during the Nika Revolt. Since the Turkish conquest of the fifteenth century, it has been used as a Mohammedan mosque,<sup>10</sup> and at one time or another parts of it have been removed and other parts—notably four lofty minarets—have been added. But the central portion, rebuilt after an earthquake in 558, yet stands as it was so lyrically described by Procopius nearly 1400 years ago—eloquent testimony to the solidity of its construction and to the excellence of its design. Structurally Justinian's church is indeed one of the world's marvels. The central dome, rising 180 feet above the pavement, is more than a hundred feet wide

the  
church of  
St. Sophia

<sup>9</sup> The pendentives are the four spherical triangles on which the dome rests.

<sup>10</sup> At the present moment it is being turned into a museum by the Turkish government.

and, together with the two half-domes built against it on north and south, covers an area some 250 feet in length. As noted, the dome is borne on pendentives, and they are held in place by four great arches springing from the four central piers, each of which is backed by a huge buttress. Since the dome is not held together by chains or other steel supports, it does not tower in the air like those of more modern times; and for that reason the church of St. Sophia is often found rather disappointing. The materials also are rather mean—plain brickwork with a covering of plaster or, in the case of the dome, of lead. This is characteristic of the Byzantine style. The architects paid little attention to the external appearance of their buildings and concentrated their talents on producing interiors of unparalleled brilliance.

Sculpture  
and mosaic

Sculpture, except for the adornment of capitals, altar fronts, and minor details, was little used; and in such places carving was normally restricted to geometrical designs or those drawn from plants and birds, frequently showing Persian influence. But the smooth walls, arches, and vaults were made to blaze with color. Variegated marbles, stripped from pagan temples, were used in rich profusion throughout the lower portions of the church, while the upper surfaces were covered with splendid mosaics. In this art the Greeks of Constantinople attained a perfection which has been the despair of all subsequent generations. Bits of tinted glass, placed edgewise to catch the light, were made into remarkably beautiful pictures of a somewhat conventionalized type—commonly human figures against a plain gold background, interspersed with trees, birds, animals, and other figures of symbolic meaning. The drawing of men and women was generally poor, with bodies out of proportion, attitudes stiff and ungraceful, and features lacking all individuality. The colors employed were few and crude. No attempt was made to produce more than a flat decoration. Yet, for these very reasons, Byzantine mosaic was more successful than if it had tried for greater realism or subtlety. The total effect is one of barbaric splendor, combined with a religious appeal that is the more direct and forceful because the art is primitive. The men who created these works had plainly lost all reverence for the insipid classicism of the preceding centuries. Their inspiration came rather from the orient and the new faith which had there developed.

Although the Byzantine style of construction was not perfected

till the days of Justinian, the accompanying scheme of decoration was developed considerably earlier—not only in Constantinople and the surrounding region, but also in Italy. As we have seen, the chief residence of the emperors in the west, beginning with Honorius, was shifted from Rome to Ravenna, and it was there that the finest architectural monuments of fifth-century Italy were erected. Three of these remarkable works still remain: the baptistery of Bishops Ursus and Neon, the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, and the church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, construction of which was begun by Theodoric the Ostrogoth. These buildings—especially the first—have wonderful mosaics, and in this respect, as well as in structural details, clearly show the directing hand of the eastern workman. Even more noteworthy is the domed church of San Vitale, built at Ravenna under the patronage of Justinian and Theodora, whose portraits appear in the famous mosaics that adorn its walls. The beautifully decorated church of Sant'Apollinare in Classe (see Plate IV) dates from the same period.

The art of Constantinople did not, of course, end with the sixth century. It lived on, to have as widespread an influence as any other feature of Byzantine civilization—an influence that will be encountered in many connections, among Christians as well as among Mohammedans.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ARAB EMPIRE

#### I. THE ARABS IN ARABIA

Arabia  
and the  
Semitic  
peoples

IN PREVIOUS chapters we have seen how the plateau of central Asia served as a vast reservoir of nomadic tribes, who from time to time overflowed with devastating effect into the surrounding regions. Arabia, to a certain extent, has played a similar part in history. It is a roughly quadrangular peninsula, which on the north has no clearly marked natural frontier. There it abuts on two rich and famous countries: Syria, which lies on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, and Mesopotamia, which is the valley of the Tigris-Euphrates. Time and again these countries have been swept by great migrations from out of Arabia. Such, it is generally held, was the common origin of the peoples known as Semitic, including the Assyrians, Chaldæans, Hebrews, Phœnicians, and Aramæans. The theory, however, is largely conjecture based on similarity of language; it had no place in the traditions of the seventh century.

Neither Romans nor Greeks had encountered anything more serious than petty raiding from the direction of the Arabian desert, the interior of which had remained unknown to them. Accordingly, the Arab conquest seemed to contemporaries as new and unprecedented as the Mohammedan faith, and the entire upheaval was considered essentially religious. Today we find it hard to believe that any degree of mere fanaticism could possibly have accomplished so tremendous a revolution in so short a time. To explain it, we must take into account economic and social conditions not only in Arabia, but also in the invaded districts. The religious factor provided merely a final impetus to latent forces which had been gaining strength for many hundreds of years. On the side of the Roman Empire Hellenism had long been weakening in the face of an oriental reaction, and this reaction was now championed and turned to enormous profit by the hosts of Islam. The problem is to see how these hosts came to be constituted.

Whatever the condition of the Arabian borderlands, the interior of the peninsula remains today as it has been throughout

the whole of recorded history. It is the home of the Bedouins, who yet live as they were living in the time of Mohammed, and as—to judge from the stories in the Old Testament—the ancient Hebrews had lived before they settled in the Promised Land. The Arab nomad depends for existence upon his flocks, and they in turn depend upon the pasturage of the desert. Normally the autumn rains produce a scanty vegetation, sufficient for sheep and goats if they are kept constantly on the move. Throughout the winter, accordingly, they are driven south, and then, just in advance of the summer drought, they are turned north, to eat their way back to the point from which they started the year before. The ordinary beast of burden is the camel, but Arabian horses, bred for speed and endurance, have of course been famous for centuries.

The  
Bedouins:  
Nomadic  
life

The life of the Bedouins is thus purely nomadic, and their social and political organization such as normally accompanies it. The patriarchal system is universal. Family groups, each under the absolute rule of its chief man, are united to form a tribe headed by a sheik. The latter holds authority over a certain strip of territory within which his people wander back and forth. It is part of his office to lead his young men on profitable expeditions against his neighbors. Caravan-raiding has been the special delight of the Bedouin for literally thousands of years. He has no use for centralized government and resists all interference with his time-honored habits. And we may be sure that, as long as the desert remains as it has been, its inhabitants—secure from outside molestation—will continue as in the past to do precisely as they please.

Physically, the desert Arab is a splendid type of manhood—slender and graceful, with piercing black eyes and regular, often handsome, features. In youth the women too are likely to be attractive, but, under the domestic labor to which they are doomed, their beauty soon fades. In bearing, the Arab sheik is the personification of dignity combined with a certain wild freedom that has ever endeared him to romantic authors. His courtesy and hospitality are proverbial, and according to his own peculiar standards—which do not exclude professional robbery and bloody feuds—he is strictly honorable. The average of intelligence among the Bedouins is high. Entirely illiterate, they are far from ignorant. They can recite from memory the genealogies not merely of their leading men, but also of their famous horses

Physical  
and moral  
traits



throughout an amazing extent of time. They have always been passionately fond of poetry, story-telling, and speculative discussion. And of all the nations of the globe they have proved themselves, when in alien environments, among the most adaptable—extraordinarily quick to learn by observation and to apply to excellent advantage the information thus acquired.

The Arabs  
in the  
seventh  
century

Nomadic society tends to follow an invariable routine of existence for an indefinite period, but this routine is one that depends on static conditions—a certain food supply and a limited population. If the former unduly decreases or if the latter unduly increases, the whole balance of life is wrecked. When, for example, climatic change brings persisting drought to a region that has earlier supplied regular pasturage, a host of tribesmen are immediately faced with starvation. To secure other territory, they have to drive out the present holders; and such a disturbance, once started, may have repercussions in far-distant lands. Occurrences of this sort have been common in the history of nomadic peoples, and they help us to understand the case of Arabia in the seventh century. It has been argued with considerable plausibility that the gradual desiccation of the interior was fundamentally responsible for the outpouring of its inhabitants. At any rate, in the light of what actually happened, we must believe that the country was overpopulated; that here, as in central Asia, hordes of land-hungry adventurers were ready to grasp the opportunity for migration and conquest just as soon as it was presented.

In the seventh century the overwhelming majority of the population was nomadic; yet in certain localities there were tribes that had long since adopted a settled mode of life. Beside the infrequent streams agricultural communities had grown up, while along the coasts, both on the east and on the west, sea trade had developed a number of small towns, from which caravan routes led to the greater markets of Syria and Persia. In ancient times the most advanced section of the peninsula had been the southwestern corner—what is now called Yemen. There a people known as Sabæans (whence the Biblical queen of Sheba) had built up a flourishing kingdom, from which famous gums and spices, such as frankincense and myrrh, were exported to the Mediterranean countries. And it was presumably from this region that a Semitic language was carried into Ethiopia, the modern Abyssinia. Although the earlier history of the connection re-

mains obscure, the final result was the destruction of the Sabæan kingdom, early in the Christian era, by the Abyssinians. Meanwhile new centers of Arabian civilization had arisen to the north.

Trajan extended the Roman dominion over Petra and the lands of the Nabatæans, which thenceforth were organized as a province (*Arabia Petraea*). Under imperial patronage the neighboring Arab tribes were then enrolled as allies against the nomads. Persia, to defend the territory of Mesopotamia, followed the same policy. So, in the sixth century, we find two Arab kingdoms guarding the desert frontier, one as a Roman and the other as a Persian protectorate. By the opening of the next century both buffer states had been destroyed through the jealousy of the great monarchies which, being engaged in a bitter struggle with each other, overlooked the potential danger from the south. Yet at the time what actual menace could be detected in Arabia? Throughout the entire peninsula there was neither prince nor people who could boast of an authority more than local. The memory of man did not run back to an age when the Arabs had ever united in a common cause. What could be more incredible than that such a union would be brought about by an obscure camel-driver of Hejaz?

Arab  
states of  
the north

That region, the strip of coast lying directly south of the Roman province, now held the commercial leadership of Arabia. Thither came vessels from Africa and India, bearing precious goods for trans-shipment to the north. The chief port for this traffic was Jidda, inland from which about fifty miles lay the little town of Mecca (*Makka*),<sup>1</sup> the center of a flourishing trade with the desert Arabs and the starting-point of the chief caravan route to Syria. Some two hundred miles to the northward was Yathrib, later renamed Medina—a settlement principally devoted to the raising of dates. But Mecca was by all odds the more important commercially, and in addition it had the reputation of being a particularly holy place. It contained a square temple called the Kaaba (i.e., the cube), in which were housed the statues of various local deities and a sacred black stone, presumably a meteorite, for it was said to have fallen from heaven. To visit this shrine and to attend a sort of fair in the neighborhood, crowds of pilgrims annually came from far and wide. So Mecca, together

The region  
of Hejaz:  
Mecca and  
Medina

<sup>1</sup> In the following pages Arabic names will normally be given in the form made familiar through long usage, with the more scholarly spellings in parenthesis.

with the tribe of Kuraish which furnished its ruling families, were known to Arabs everywhere.

The  
Arabic  
language  
and  
literature

We have little sure information as to intellectual conditions in Mecca, or throughout Arabia generally. From time immemorial the Arabs had held poets and story-tellers in high esteem, and so had developed a literature of song and fiction that was virtually common to the entire people. It was, however, almost exclusively an oral literature preserved by memory. Writing as yet was used only in scattered communities along the frontiers. Although the Sabæan language is known from very ancient inscriptions, it had never become more than a local dialect. What is called classic Arabic was the vernacular of the Bedouins; and the fact that it was elaborately developed, with rich vocabulary and vivid imagery, is further testimony to the remarkable genius of the people. It came to be written through northern influence. Aramaic, the language of Christ and the apostles, had for hundreds of years been the principal means of communication among the traders of Syria and the adjoining regions. Spreading among the Nabatæans, it inevitably reached also the Arabs of Hejaz, and when they came to write their own vernacular, they naturally adapted to the purpose the Aramaic alphabet. But in this respect, as in so many others, the career of Mohammed marked the beginning of a new epoch.

Religious  
beliefs of

Meanwhile there had also been an infiltration of foreign religions into Arabia, for as yet the natives had no faith of their own that could compete with those of Syria and Mesopotamia. Although the Bedouins had a number of traditional beliefs with respect to the supernatural, they were of the most primitive kind. The people of the interior kept up a rather perfunctory worship of various local gods and goddesses, such as those honored at Mecca; they recognized many sacred rocks, trees, wells, and the like; and they had a lively respect for the spirits (*jinn*) which, they thought, inhabited the desert. Along the northern frontier, on the other hand, the Arabs quite generally had adopted the cults of their civilized neighbors. On the side of Persia Zoroastrianism had obtained an extensive following, while from Syria Jewish and Christian influences had come, at least in some measure, to affect the western Arabs, notably those of Mecca and Medina. This fact must now serve to introduce the story of the illustrious prophet of Islam.

## 2. MOHAMMED AND ISLAM

Mohammed (*Muhammad*) was born at Mecca about the year 570. His family, though belonging to the tribe of Kuraish, was not wealthy, and as a boy of nine or ten he was left an orphan. Thus coming under the care of an uncle, Mohammed spent his youth in comparative poverty—a period of which we know nothing except that he became thoroughly familiar with contemporary methods of trade. Of formal education he could have had little; that he ever learned to write Arabic has been denied, but is not improbable. In his travels with caravans, however, Mohammed unquestionably picked up a great deal of miscellaneous information. As a trader, he would have the opportunity of meeting men from different lands; as an intelligent Arab, he would store in his memory much of what they told him. And since there were many Arabic-speaking Jews and Christians, such a smattering of their doctrines as he later displayed would not be hard to obtain. We may be positive that he never read their Scriptures.

Early life

By the age of about twenty-four Mohammed had so far perfected his professional training that he was employed as commercial agent by a wealthy widow of Mecca named Khadija. And after he had successfully led a caravan to Syria on her behalf, he became the lady's husband—her third. Mohammed was of course much the younger of the two, but the marriage was a happy one; and it was during his long life with Khadija that he began his career as a religious reformer. Being now a man of substance and leisure, he could devote himself to the problems of faith and conduct which must first have attracted his attention long before. The traditional polytheism of the Arabs, he felt, was wrong; there was only one God (Allah), the creator of all things, in whose sight man must live righteously in order to win salvation on the awful day of judgment that momentarily impended. When the last trump sounded, the good would be raised to the everlasting joys of paradise, while the bad would be cast into the flames of hell.

Religious convictions

To Jews and Christians these ideas would seem very familiar; they must, in fact, have been somehow derived from such teachers. Mohammed insisted that his God was the God of the Jews and of the Christians—the God testified to by the prophets, including Moses, Abraham, Noah, and Jesus. The latter, he said,

though miraculously born of the Virgin Mary, was not Himself divine. Since Christian doctrine was in his eyes incompatible with strict monotheism, he would have none of it. On the whole, therefore, his inspiration was essentially Hebrew. Christianity he regarded as at most a variety of Judaism. And even as the prophets of old had received direct commissions from the Almighty for the instruction of the people, might not he, Mohammed, be made the intermediary for a new dispensation from on high?

The  
prophet  
of Allah

It was not until Mohammed was over forty and had spent much time in prayer and fasting, that he was rewarded by visions which convinced him of his prophetic mission. From the angel Gabriel, as he told his wife and a few intimate friends, came the messages that were eventually to found a new religion for Arabia and the world. There can be no question of his sincerity. Even if his sayings were often tinged with practical or perhaps opportunist considerations, we should no more impugn his honesty than that of his Hebrew predecessors, who also had employed common sense while acting as the spokesmen of God. The subconscious mind, as we know from the modern study of psychology, can perform marvels—especially in the case of a man like Mohammed, nervously high-strung, extraordinarily sensitive, and subject to periodic attacks of hysteria which he and others considered manifest evidence of supernatural powers. Yet, whether or not we call his visions hallucinations, the fact remains that they were real to him and to his followers; being so, they revolutionized the course of events in three continents. The historical importance of a religion is not that it is true, but that people believe it so.

At first Mohammed had little success with his preaching. While his wife Khadija and his cousin Ali embraced the new faith from the outset, most of his relatives, including the uncle who had brought him up, held aloof. Among the other early converts the only prominent man was Abu Bakr, who was to remain Mohammed's closest friend and adviser. Later he gained another important recruit in a young man named Omar (*Umar*), eventually to prove himself one of the world's great statesmen. The majority of the Kuraish, however, bitterly opposed the upstart prophet, who denounced the traditional worship to which they were attached by business interest as well as by sentiment. They ridiculed Mohammed as a crazy poet. His teachings, they said, were absurd. How could God restore them to life after they

had turned to dust and dry bones? Why should they believe a simple fellow from among themselves, who ate like them and walked like them in the market? If he had a divine commission, let him show them an angel or work for them some evident miracle. To which Mohammed replied with eloquent stories about the persecution of the ancient prophets and with lurid descriptions of the hell that yawned for unbelievers.

Finally, after his position at Mecca had been further weakened by the death of his wife in 619, followed by that of his uncle, Mohammed decided to leave that town for a more sympathetic environment. At Yathrib there was a considerable colony of Jews, or Judaized Arabs, at least some of whom were willing to recognize Mohammed as their promised Messiah. There was, furthermore, a long-standing feud between rival tribes of the neighborhood which had come to be found inconvenient for all parties. The upshot was that the men of Yathrib made a solemn treaty with Mohammed, swearing to accept whatever peace he might dictate and to protect him and his followers as members of their own families. (So, in 622, the prophet and his little band of followers left Mecca, breaking all connection with their own groups of kindred. This was the famous Hegira<sup>2</sup> (*Hijra*)—the Separation from Mecca, from which Mohammedans reckon their years. And it was a noteworthy event, for it marked the definite organization of the new religion.

The  
Hegira  
(622)

Yathrib was now renamed Medina (*Madinat-an-Nabi*, City of the Prophet), and from there Mohammed continued the promulgation of his divine messages, now turned from short exhortations in a highly poetic vein to detailed edicts on social and political problems as well as on matters of faith and worship. The Mohammedan religion formally appears as Islam, meaning submission to God. One who has made his submission is a Moslem (*Muslim*). His confession of faith is extremely simple: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet." After ceremonial ablution with water or with sand, he should pray at certain fixed hours of the day—tradition says five times—and these prayers are accompanied by a mild discipline of bodily postures resembling athletic exercises. Service in the mosque is merely common prayer under the guidance of a leader, for there has never been a Mohammedan priesthood. At first the faithful

The formal  
regulation  
of Islam

<sup>2</sup> Pronounce with the accent on the first syllable and with all vowels short.

prayed with their faces toward Jerusalem; subsequently, when Mohammed found that most Jews rejected his teaching, he substituted Mecca. To that holy place the Moslem should make a pilgrimage at least once during his life. He should, furthermore, give alms for charitable and pious ends, and he should fast from sunrise to sunset throughout the sacred month of Ramadan.

These were and are the major requirements of Islam, to which were added from time to time a large number of moral precepts—rather modifications of existing custom than radical innovations. To a limited degree polygamy and slavery were both retained. The prophet himself, after the death of Khadija, took many wives, making such alliances for the sake of political advantage. Yet in various ways he sought to ameliorate the condition both of slaves and of women. Marriage customs were greatly improved. Sexual promiscuity, which earlier had been common, was severely punished. The primitive system of the blood feud, by which the family avenged wrongs done to its members, was restricted by enforcing the acceptance of compensation when that was rightfully offered.<sup>3</sup> The Arabs were already acquainted with taboos in connection with food and drink, and Mohammed wisely refrained from adding any very rigorous prohibitions. Moslems should abstain from the flesh of all animals slaughtered in the name of any god except Allah, as well as from pork and from wine. But the latter restrictions, it should be noted, could work no great hardship on the Bedouins. As the mark of a national cult, the new discipline was eminently sensible in its moderation.

The Koran With respect to all these matters our primary source of information is the Koran (*Quran*, Reading), a collection of Mohammed's sayings, which in its present form dates from the period just after the prophet's death. Most of its contents, however, had been written down earlier—either by Mohammed himself or by others—and much of it had been committed to memory by the devout. The authenticity of its substance is thus unquestionable, and allowance need only be made for revision of its wording and rearrangement of its parts. The latter consideration is of little importance, since the compilers—except for an opening prayer—merely placed the 114 chapters, or *suras*, in decreasing order of their length. The Koran is therefore so devoid of logical coherence that to read and appreciate it as a whole is extremely

<sup>3</sup> Compare the Germanic customs noted above, p. 78.

difficult. Each fragment must be taken as it was originally uttered—as a separate message delivered on a particular occasion.

Thus understood, the Koran is magnificent. To the student of Arabian law and institutions the later *suras* promulgated at Medina are the most instructive; but as literature, revealing the very heart of Islam, the earlier ones are infinitely superior. Most of them, being short, are to be found toward the end of the book. In form they resemble modernistic verse, being made up of irregular lines without definite meter or rhyme pattern, but with rhythmic cadences and combinations of syllables according to resemblance of sound. Although Mohammed considered the term an insult, he really was a poet, and a great one. To turn the Koran into matter-of-fact prose is to spoil it. Indeed, much of its beauty is inevitably destroyed by any kind of translation. Nevertheless, those of us unfortunate enough to be ignorant of Arabic may gain some inkling of the original by a good version in a modern language.

This is the opening prayer (i) :

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds,  
Merciful and compassionate,  
King of the Day of Judgment!

Typical  
Early  
*Suras*

Thee do we serve, and of Thee do we beg assistance.

Guide us in the right way—

The way of them who are pleasing in Thy sight,

Not of them who bear Thy wrath; not of them who are astray.

—Other *suras* are strongly reminiscent of the Psalms, but with touches peculiar to Arabia. For example (lxxxvii) :

Praise the name of thy Lord, the Most High,  
Who created and designed all things,  
Who preordained them and directs them;  
Who makes the grass to grow in the pastures,  
And then burns it brown like straw. . . .  
Happy is he who purifies himself  
And remembers the name of his Lord in prayer.  
But ye prefer the life of this world,  
Though that to come is better, and is everlasting.  
For this of a truth was in the books of old,  
The books of Abraham and Moses.

On one occasion we are told that Mohammed had for several days failed to receive any revelation and was on that account being



ridiculed by his enemies. Then God spoke to him as follows (xciii) :

By the splendor of day,  
And by the darkness of night—  
Thy Lord has not forsaken thee, nor does he hate thee,  
Verily the life to come shall be kinder to thee than is the present;  
Thy Lord shall give thee a reward and thou shalt be well pleased.  
Did he not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter?  
Did he not find thee wandering and give thee guidance?  
Did he not find thee in need and give thee riches?  
Wherefore oppress not the orphan,  
Drive not the beggar away,  
But proclaim the goodness of thy Lord.

The majestic opening of this *sura*—in form a solemn oath—is characteristic of many others. Among them the one following is perhaps the finest (c) :

By the panting war-horses,  
Striking fire from their hoofs,  
Charging at dawn,  
Under a cloud of dust  
Piercing the enemy host—  
Truly man is ungrateful toward his Lord,  
And he himself is witness of his ingratitude;  
For truly his heart is set on worldly gain.  
Does he not know that, when the graves are opened,  
All in the breasts of men shall be as daylight?  
That on this Day their Lord shall know *them*?

The Last Judgment is an ever recurrent theme, and is described under many names. For instance (ci) :

The Day of Smiting! What is the Day of Smiting?  
And what can make thee understand the Day of Smiting—  
The Day when men shall be as scattered moths,  
When the mountains shall be as flecks of carded wool!  
He whose balance is well weighted—he shall gain a life joyful;  
He whose balance is yet empty—he shall go down to the pit of hell.  
And what can make thee understand the pit of hell?  
Burning fire!

Paradise (lvi), on the contrary, is a cool place, watered by limpid streams and shaded by thornless trees which bear an inexhaustible crop of delicious fruits. There shall dwell the "people of the

right hand," reclining on sumptuous couches, eating choice viands, and quaffing a heavenly beverage that causes neither headache nor drunkenness! They shall be waited on by handsome pages, always in the bloom of youth, and as wives shall have *hours* created for them by a special providence—lovely damsels with eyes like black pearls!

To the modern reader these descriptions of rewards and punishments in the hereafter must seem rather childishly realistic; but for that very reason did they not hold a greater appeal to a primitive people? The audience to which Mohammed addressed himself could hardly have appreciated a doctrine based on philosophical abstraction. Like all successful reformers, he had to teach new ideals in a familiar language. The rich imagery of the Koran was only such as even the illiterate Bedouins delighted in. And its religious ideas were so lofty that they could offset, in the eyes of the more sophisticated, a possible crudity of presentation. After all, the essence of Mohammed's preaching was not belief in hell fire and heavenly bliss, but man's submission to God, to be shown by repentance and a virtuous life.

As a religion, Islam was founded during the prophet's ministry at Mecca. His later life was devoted to the establishment of an organization to enforce its dominion; and since there was no pre-existing Arabian state, his system was of necessity semi-political. At Medina Mohammed was confronted by multifarious problems. He had to prescribe details of worship and everyday morality for his followers. He became involved in conflicts with the Jews and other local inhabitants who, refusing to recognize his prophetic mission, opposed his authority on all occasions. Also to be considered was the project of spreading the faith among the Bedouin tribes. All these matters depended on the outcome of the feud with Mecca. Since the Hegira, the band of Moslems had, of course, ceased to owe any loyalty to the tribe of Kuraish, and they now, with the constant support of revelations from heaven, began raiding the caravans of their erstwhile kindred. This policy led to greater hostilities, and finally, in 624, Mohammed gained his first major success. At Badr, near the Red Sea, his followers won a pitched battle against a force that outnumbered them three to one. The Meccans had never ceased their clamor for a miracle. This, said the victors, was now afforded them; for without the help of God's angels, who appeared beside him in

Mohammed's religious and political leadership

the field, the prophet could never have prevailed against the hostile army.

Then ensued three more years of desultory fighting, in which the troops of Islam—as yet only a few hundreds—sometimes won and sometimes lost. Yet on the whole the Moslem cause steadily advanced. The antagonistic Jews were driven from Medina and their lands were confiscated by the faithful. More booty flowed in from successful raids against the enemy. Then, in 627, Mohammed obtained another signal victory. An army of several thousand men, recruited by the Kuraish from among their Bedouin allies, besieged Medina but were repulsed through Mohammed's employment of a trench as a line of defense—a trick which he is said to have learned from a Persian slave. However this may be, the battle proved another turning-point in the history of Arabia. The prophet became undisputed master of his city and so found himself in a position to assume the offensive against Mecca.

The capture of Mecca (630)

Thenceforth the opposition rapidly weakened. In 628 a ten years' truce was sworn between the two parties and Mohammed for the first time was able to carry out the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca which he had continually emphasized as an essential part of the new faith. The occasion served mainly to advertise the prophet's increasing fame, and several prominent men of the Kuraish—among them the great warriors, Khalid and Amr ibn al-As—announced their conversion to his cause. In the following year came the final triumph, when the breakdown of the truce brought the renewal of hostilities. Mohammed, now possessed of an overwhelming force, was allowed to occupy Mecca almost without striking a blow, and the first chapter in the Holy War of Islam may be said to have come to a close.

Mohammed used his power wisely. The Kaaba was formally purified by casting out the idols which it had so long housed. But the temple itself was preserved, and with it the sacred black stone—an action justified by a special revelation. The Meccan cult, the prophet declared, had originally been founded by Abraham; his modern successor was merely restoring its pristine character. Thus, consciously or unconsciously, Mohammed made the revolution easy for the Kuraish to accept. As a matter of fact, they soon found that, by guarding Islam's holiest shrine, they stood to gain infinitely more than they had ever thought to lose.

And with that ultimate testimony to the might of Allah, all resistance crumbled.

To the mass of his converts the sudden death of Mohammed in 632 was a frightful calamity. But his work was done. Within ten years after leaving Mecca as a fugitive he had returned as a conqueror. His fame had spread throughout the length and breadth of Arabia; and while as yet all the Bedouin tribes had by no means submitted to his dominion, the war which he had proclaimed against the enemies of Islam was to bring an amazing series of triumphs such as his wildest dreams could never have foretold.

The death  
of Moham-  
med (632)

### 3. THE EARLY CALIPHATE

The first problem raised by the unexpected death of Mohammed was how to perpetuate the organization which he had founded. On this point, strangely enough, the prophet had announced no revelation; yet it was one that could hardly have escaped consideration by his relatives and associates. In spite of his many weddings, Mohammed was survived by only one child, Fatima, daughter of Khadija. She was married to Ali, the prophet's cousin, and by him had two sons. If the headship of Islam were declared hereditary like that of an ordinary family, the office would fall to Ali; but he was more remarkable for his piety than for his ability. Rather than to him, Mohammed's confidence had been given to three tried counselors: Abu Bakr, Abu Ubaida, and Omar. And their position was further strengthened by the fact that in his later years Mohammed's favorite wife was the young and spirited Aïsha, daughter of Abu Bakr. When the crisis arose, it was this group that was prepared for decisive action.

Abu Bakr  
(632-34)  
and Omar  
(634-44)

Coming before the assembled tribesmen—among whom the rivalry of Mecca and Medina was already threatening to produce armed conflict—Abu Bakr, as spokesman for the prophet's companions, insisted that the leadership be given to one of their number. He suggested Omar or Abu Ubaida, but they joined in acclaiming the elder statesman himself. The excited crowd was swept off its feet, and Abu Bakr was enthusiastically recognized as caliph (*Khalifa*, Successor of the Prophet). Thus informally, and in appearance without premeditation, was established the institution which was thenceforth to dominate the Mohammedan world. And although there were factions that

remained bitterly hostile to the new settlement, its astounding success made organized opposition for a time impossible. The aged Abu Bakr was left only two years of life; then, on his nomination, the caliphate passed to Omar, whose rule of ten years ranks as one of the most brilliant in history. It was this caliph who formally adopted the style, Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Muminin*).

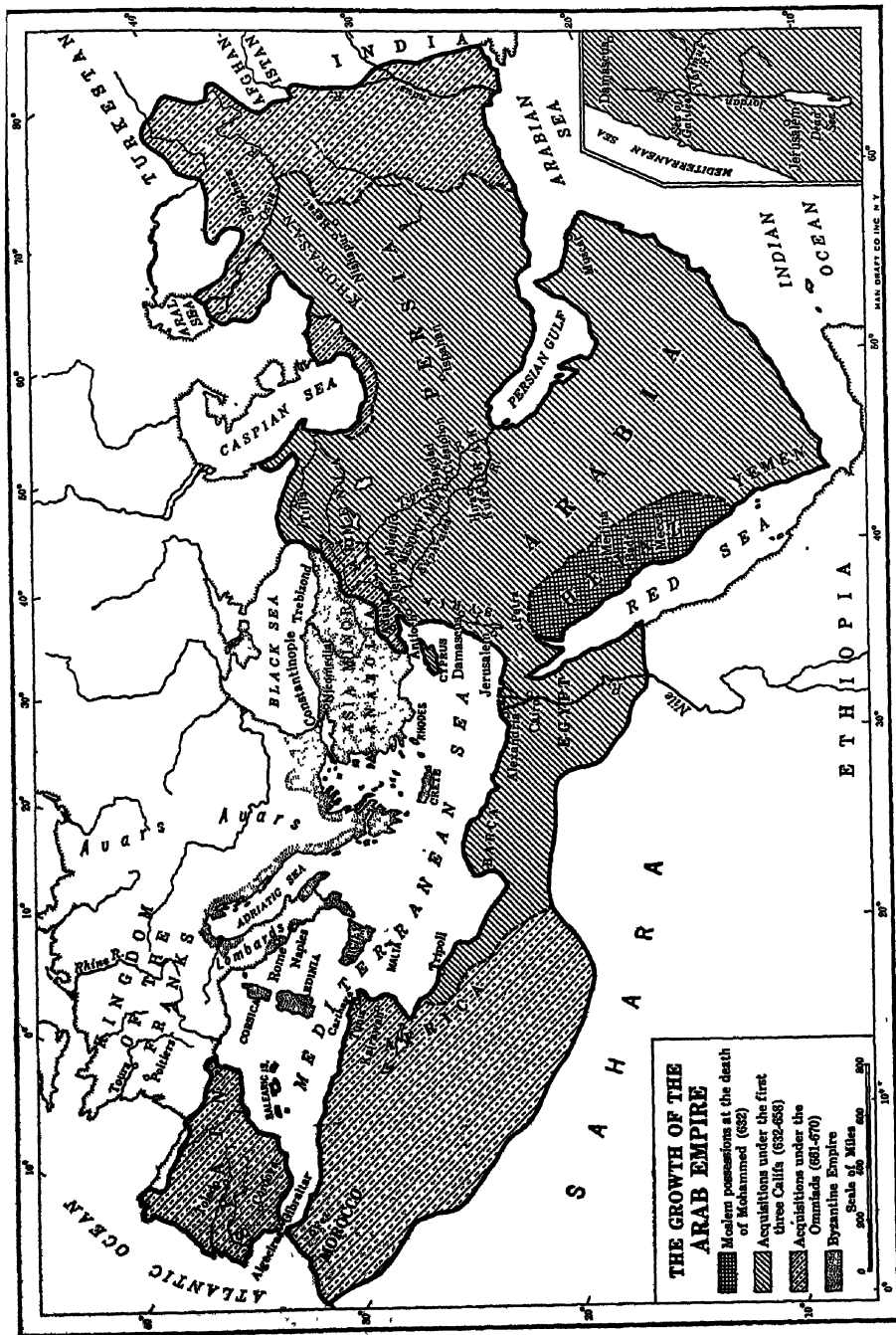
The unification of Arabia

One great responsibility of the caliphate was the Holy War to extend Moslem supremacy throughout Arabia. Mohammed's authority, in spite of legendary exaggeration, had scarcely reached beyond the district of Hejaz, and at the news of his death even those Bedouins who had already been subjected tended to throw off allegiance to Medina. This reaction was immediately checked by the energy of Abu Bakr. Under command of Khalid, the little army of Islam won battle after battle against the tribes of central Arabia, so that within hardly more than a year the caliph could shift operations from the desert to the adjoining regions, thus resuming a project already contemplated by Mohammed. As he had perceived, nothing would so quickly stimulate adhesion to the sacred cause as profitable raids against a common foe. Accordingly, while offensives were still being pushed in the southern peninsula, Abu Bakr sent various bands of volunteers into Syria and Mesopotamia.

Moslem raids into Persia and the Byzantine Empire

The time was well chosen. Persia, since the great defeat of some five years earlier, had fallen into a state of helplessness. The deposition of Chosroës II<sup>4</sup> had been followed by a prolonged civil war, and the ultimate recognition of his grandson, Yezdegerd, had brought only a superficial restoration of the monarchy. Nor were conditions much better in the Byzantine Empire. Heraclius seemed exhausted by his heroic campaigns against Persia. His provinces were groaning under an atrocious burden of taxation, and to economic grievances were added those occasioned by the imperial policy of religious despotism. Outside the Hellenized population of the great cities the government had few loyal supporters. The inhabitants of the countryside, exploited for a thousand years by the Greek aristocracy, would fight no desperate battles in its behalf. The Semitic peasantry of Syria, like that of Mesopotamia, would inevitably feel more akin to Arabs than to Byzantines or Persians. And the desert

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 117.



tribes along the border, although they might be Christian or Zoroastrian in faith, would be only too willing to join expeditions that promised unlimited plunder.

The possibilities of an aggressive campaign on the part of the Moslems were thus tremendous and were clearly advertised by Khalid's great raid of 634. His first success was at Hira on the Euphrates, which paid him well to get rid of him. Thence he turned toward Syria, where scattered Arab forces were being threatened by a Byzantine army under Theodore, brother of Heraclius. Combining speed with good generalship, Khalid drove past Palmyra and Damascus, effected a junction with his compatriots, and with the combined forces met and defeated Theodore in July, 634. Just at this point Abu Bakr was succeeded by Omar, and that caliph, at once appreciating the opportunity that lay before him, began the systematic conquest of the old Roman provinces. While roving bands of Arabs occupied the exposed countryside, Khalid advanced to the siege of Damascus, which, with the help of allies inside the walls, was taken before the end of 635.

The battle  
of the  
Yarmuk  
(636)

Meanwhile Heraclius had collected a new and greater army, and in the spring of 636 it fell upon Khalid's little force which had been pushed some hundred miles to the north of Damascus. Again showing rare generalship, Khalid made no effort to hold his recent conquests, but rapidly fell back on the valley of the Yarmuk, a westward-flowing tributary of the Jordan that would, if necessary, afford a sure means of escape into the desert. That eventuality, however, did not arise. Khalid's retreat had allowed him to call up needed reinforcements, while his opponents had been seriously weakened by the rivalry of their generals and by the desertion of their Arab allies. After weeks of futile skirmishing with an elusive foe, the Byzantine army was trapped between two converging streams and there annihilated in August, 636.

The  
conquest  
of Syria

Thus was established the military superiority of the Arabs, which was due not only to the greater mobility of their light cavalry, but also to the intelligence of their commanders and to the *élan* of their troops—the characteristic verve of the Bedouin intensified by religious exaltation. Furthermore, the battle of the Yarmuk assured the Arabs unmolested possession of Syria. Henceforth they had merely to consolidate their positions and to organize a permanent government—a task which Omar assigned

to the wise and experienced Abu Ubaida. Under his able direction, Khalid and the other Moslem generals quickly rounded out their occupation. To the north the recapture of Damascus was at once followed by the capitulation of Antioch, Aleppo, and all the Byzantine fortresses below the range of the Amanus. To the south all Palestine was speedily taken, except only the greater cities, which offered stubborn resistance to the invaders. But at last Jerusalem fell in 638, and Cæsarea in 640. The Asiatic tide had turned, sweeping away the work of Alexander and his Roman successors.

As long as the issue in Syria still hung in doubt, Omar began no major operations in Mesopotamia; then, after the great victory on the Yarmuk, a relatively small force was sent against the Persians to avenge the defeat of a marauding expedition several years earlier. The result must have come as a surprise to both parties. Yezdegerd's best army was shattered in one battle, and the whole of Irak (i.e., the lower valley of the Tigris-Euphrates), together with the capital city of Ctesiphon, fell into the hands of the Arabs. The next step was to connect Irak and Syria by reducing the rest of Mesopotamia—a task completed by the capture of Mosul in 641. For a time the Persians succeeded in holding the line of the mountains to the east, but by 642 that too had been broken and all but local resistance to the Moslem advance came to an end. The last of the Persian kings, a fugitive far beyond the Caspian, is said to have been slain by one of his own satraps in 651, while the triumphant forces of Islam were occupying the remains of his kingdom. By the second half of the century, at any rate, the ancient state of Persia had been obliterated and a new epoch had begun for the history of western and central Asia.

The  
conquest  
of Persia  
(637-51)

Meanwhile Omar had launched a third great offensive. This was against Egypt, where conditions once more proved an enormous advantage to the invaders. Not only was the province suffering from the usual evils of overtaxation and maladministration, but it was also—even more than Syria—paralyzed by religious discord. For a long time the population had been rather sharply divided into two parts: the Hellenized inhabitants of the cities, and the descendants of the original Egyptians, or Copts. The former, which included the ruling aristocracy, were naturally obedient to the emperor and accepted his dictates in religion. The

The  
conquest  
of Egypt  
(640-42)



latter, on the contrary, were fervently monophysite;<sup>5</sup> and the tyranny of Cyrus, installed by Heraclius as patriarch of Alexandria, served merely to intensify their bitter opposition to the government. At this propitious moment there appeared from beyond the isthmus a Moslem army under the command of Amr ibn al-As, a general who had proved his ability during the campaigns in Syria. In 640 he broke the defending force of Byzantines and followed up this success by capturing the Egyptian Babylon (or Cairo). The sympathy of the Copts, the personal ambitions of Cyrus, and the death of Heraclius (641) all conspired to make the subjection of the province ridiculously easy. Even Alexandria was surrendered before the end of 642, and in the next year Amr completed his conquests by seizing the adjoining district of Barca.

The Arab  
migration  
and the  
spread of  
Islam

Whatever doubt of Allah's omnipotence had still lingered in the minds of the Arabs vanished before the stupendous victories of the years following the death of the prophet. When ancient and powerful states had been swept away like straw before the desert wind, what further justification of the Moslem claims could be demanded? One who was not drawn to Islam by sincere faith would inevitably be attracted thither by material advantage. Here were countries of fabulous wealth placed at the disposal of God's elect. By becoming one of that blessed group, even the poorest Bedouin might attain riches and honor. The prophet himself had declared that the good things of the world were for the faithful; it was their sacred duty to force the unbeliever to submit and pay them tribute. Thus the conquest of Persia, Syria, and Egypt was no mere series of military adventures. The Arabs by tens of thousands poured into the occupied lands to exploit their resources, and this migration permanently altered their social complexion.

The expansion of Islam, however, was not solely due to the shifting of the Arabian population. Large numbers of Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians became enthusiastic converts to the new faith. Its creed and discipline, as we have seen, were extremely simple; to accept them must have seemed to many, if not an actual religious advance, a mere change of ritualistic forms. And the practical considerations were most alluring: the Moslems were the lords of creation, the rest of mankind their

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 112.

servants and tributaries. The notion that Mohammedanism was a religion of the sword, forced upon defenseless masses by a bloodthirsty horde of fanatics, is the exact contrary of the truth. The Moslem conquest was a political conquest; its leaders deprecated unnecessary slaughter of unbelievers, or even their compulsory conversion, because they were to be the financial support of the government. Fundamentally, the Arab state began much like that of the Huns or of the Avars—as a glorified system of tribute-taking. Further consideration of this question, however, must be postponed until we have examined the later fortunes of the caliphate.

In 644 the triumphant presidency of Omar was brought to an untimely end by an obscure assassin; but before he died, the caliph named an electoral commission of six men, authorized to select one of their own number to succeed him. The choice ultimately fell on Othman, a member of a prominent Meccan family known as Ommiads (more properly *Umayyad*, descended from Umayya). Othman proved a much easier master than Omar had been—perhaps that was why he was elected—yet no amount of good nature could make up for utter lack of statesmanship. Before long the new caliph's weakness, together with his policy of filling the greater offices with his own relatives, led to widespread discontent. As the great wars of conquest came to a close, the flow of captured treasure naturally dwindled, while the increase in the number of true believers meant a proportionate decrease in the revenue from taxation. The government was as yet a haphazard affair without any sound financial basis, and Othman was no constitutional reformer. As a matter of fact, he was totally unable even to maintain order in his dominions, and finally, in 655, an insurrection at Medina resulted in his murder.

Othman  
(644-55)

The natural result of this affair was a reaction against the caliphate as originally established, and the first man to gain by it was Ali. As the son-in-law of the prophet, he was the logical chief of the legitimist party—those who protested that the headship of Islam could rightfully be held only by a member of Mohammed's own family, and that, accordingly, the first three caliphs were usurpers. Proclaimed at Medina after the murder of Othman, Ali found his chief support in Irak and Persia; so he established his capital at Kufa on the Euphrates. Syria, on the other hand, was under the control of the Ommiad, Muawiya, whom Omar had appointed to the governorship. An able and

Ali  
(655-61)

energetic man, Muawiya at once took up the cause of the martyred Othman and before long he succeeded in forming an alliance with Amr, the master of Egypt. These two carried all before them in the west. In 660 Muawiya was hailed as caliph at Jerusalem, and with the assassination of Ali in the following year, the legitimist cause collapsed.

#### 4. THE OMMIAD CALIPHATE AT DAMASCUS

Muawiya  
(661-80)

With Muawiya the caliphate may be said to have passed from the republican to the monarchical stage. As Medina had now ceased to be in any respect the true center of Arab dominion, and as the caliph's chief support lay in Syria, he moved the capital of Islam to Damascus. This transfer, in more ways than one, was a change from Arabian to Roman custom. Hitherto the caliphate had been essentially a personal leadership of the faithful—a religious office with certain political functions attached. Henceforth it was to be a territorial kingship which carried with it control of faith and morals. The caliph thus came to be surrounded by professional ministers chosen solely with a view to their political usefulness—among them many Christians. He headed a regular system of administration largely borrowed from the Byzantine Empire. Lastly, Muawiya succeeded in placing the state on a dynastic basis. At his death in 680 his son secured the throne in spite of opposition from Arabia and Irak. A legitimist insurrection headed by a son of Ali was put down, and for the next seventy years the caliphate remained a monopoly of the Ommiad house.

The Arabs  
on the sea  
and in Asia  
Minor

The period of disorder that ensued upon the death of Omar naturally interrupted the advance of Moslem conquest; then, with the reorganization of the caliphate at Damascus, the offensive was triumphantly resumed on all fronts. As governor of Syria, Muawiya early turned his energies to the construction of a fleet, and in this project he was ably seconded by Amr in Egypt. The result was the establishment of a Mohammedan naval supremacy on the Mediterranean that lasted for the better part of five centuries and vitally affected the later history of Europe. In 649 the Arabs took Cyprus, and from this base they directed plundering expeditions against Rhodes, Crete, the Ægean islands, and the coasts of Asia Minor. In 655 a Byzantine fleet, personally commanded by the emperor, was utterly destroyed in a battle which was to prove as decisive as that on the Yarmuk.

It not only isolated the imperial possessions to the westward, but also exposed Constantinople to direct attack by sea—an advantage that was to be pushed with great ardor by the Ommiad caliphs.

From Mesopotamia the Arabs had already penetrated far into Armenia, and this whole country—both the Persian and the Roman halves—was now definitely conquered. From Syria and from the shore of the Black Sea Muawiya's armies converged on Chalcedon, while year after year his fleet sought to force an entrance to the Bosphorus and so to assure the fall of the great city. But the Greeks, while abandoning their outlying territories, were always able to muster enough strength by sea to defend their capital; and after the death of Muawiya the Moslems temporarily relaxed their efforts in this direction. In Asia Minor, too, the Byzantine fortunes took a slight turn for the better, so that, by the end of the seventh century, the Arabs were once more being held along the line of the mountains to the south. The next great triumph for Islam, as the event soon proved, was to be won in Africa.

From Amr's position at Barca it was an obvious policy to launch raids into the imperial provinces to the westward, but no attempt at systematic conquest of these lands was made until after the final success of Muawiya. Advancing without serious resistance through Tripoli, the army of the caliph then, in 670, established a great military base at Kairawan, and thence began the reduction of the ancient Carthaginian territory. From the first the Byzantines, having lost control of the sea, were powerless to defend their possessions; the formidable enemy was rather the Moors, who in the previous century had almost undone Justinian's conquest of the Vandal kingdom. Since then, through the constant arrival of fresh recruits from the wild borderlands, their hold on the country outside the great cities and fortified camps had steadily strengthened. And as the Arabs, unused to a peasantry of such independent spirit, maintained their usual attitude of magnificent pride, the Moors rose in revolt and drove them out of the whole region west of Barca.

The conquest of northern Africa

This defeat coincided with a civil war over the succession to the caliphate; then another able Ommiad, Abd-al-Malik (685-705), made good his claim to the throne, and under him the lost territory was slowly but solidly reoccupied. The new commanders followed a policy of force combined with diplomacy to

detach the Moors from the Byzantine cause, and it succeeded admirably. A last naval expedition from Constantinople in 697 failed to achieve its objective. Carthage fell, and the entire southern coast of the Mediterranean came into the hands of the Moslems. Many years were of course to be spent in the reduction of the mountainous interior, but in the meantime thousands of Moors found a fresh outlet for their untamed energy by espousing the cause of Islam. Thanks to their religious fervor and warlike ambition, Musa, the African governor, eventually secured the armies wherewith to undertake the invasion of Europe.

The  
conquest  
of Spain  
(711-18)

Concerning the later history of the Visigoths there is little of interest to record. By the opening of the seventh century they had finally annexed the lands of the Sueves in Galicia and retaken the Mediterranean shore from the Byzantine garrisons. This advance, however, was due rather to the weakness of the enemy than to the strength of the Visigothic kingdom, the annals of which become a wearisome succession of petty conspiracies and insurrections. To a prince seeking an adventure with which to occupy his restless subjects, Spain seemed a promising field. So in 711 Musa authorized one of his lieutenants, a certain Tarik, to lead a force of Moors across the strait. Skirting the rock that still bears his name (Gibraltar, *Gebel Tarik*), he landed in the Bay of Algeciras and thence proceeded toward Cadiz. Roderick, doomed to be the last king of the Visigoths, tried to drive back the invaders, but instead suffered a crushing defeat. Before the end of the summer Tarik was in Toledo, the royal capital. What had begun as a mere plundering expedition thus turned into another momentous triumph for Islam. Musa appeared on the scene with a larger army, and as the result of his campaigns, the Visigothic state soon went the way of Persia. Within seven years the Moslems had reached Septimania beyond the Pyrenees, and within a further seven years they were raiding the plains of central Gaul.

Arab  
operations  
in Asia

In the orient, also, the hosts of Islam were still advancing. While completing the reorganization of Persia, the Arabs—thanks to the zealous recruits whom they found among the Iranians—pushed their raids far beyond its frontiers into the lands of the Turks, Chinese, Afghans, Thibetans, and Hindus. There, as usual, marauding served as a preparation for conquest. By the second quarter of the eighth century the domains of the caliph had come to include the valleys of the Indus and the Oxus, with advance posts extending into Turkestan. In Asia Minor,

however, the Byzantine power, which had earlier seemed on the point of utter collapse, revived sufficiently to hold a frontier extending roughly from Adana on the Mediterranean to Trebizond on the Black Sea. And out of the warfare in this Anatolian country emerged a general named Leo, who secured the imperial crown in 717—just in time to organize the defense of the capital against another great attack of the Moslems by land and sea. Again the issue turned on the holding of the Bosphorus and when, after twelve months of bitter fighting, the caliph's fleet had been driven off, his armies abandoned the campaign.

The Arab Empire of the eighth century, reaching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Himalayas, was the ultimate product of marauding expeditions undertaken by the nomads of Arabia. When they came into the territories of their powerful neighbors, they brought with them no political institutions beyond those of their ancient tribal system, and no political ambition beyond that of collecting tribute. But they were not mere savage despoilers like the Huns. On taking over the administration of the conquered lands, they carefully preserved anything that might be turned to their own advantage. The provincial organization of Romans or Persians they left intact, merely substituting Arabs for natives in the topmost offices. Subordinates, as long as they proved loyal to their new masters, remained unmolested. Accordingly, the only persons to suffer complete ruin were the members of the old official aristocracy. To lesser men—such as peasants, laborers, petty traders, and civil servants—the Moslem conquest was a blessing rather than a calamity. Their burdens under the new régime could be no heavier than those already borne, and by the easy process of accepting Islam they could themselves enter the favored class in the state.

The  
nature of  
the Arab  
Empire

Hundreds of thousands quickly grasped the advantages offered by the new faith, and throughout the centuries down to the present their descendants have largely remained Mohammedan. Legally they became Arabs as well as Moslems, for converts had to be adopted into Arab tribes and receive Arab names. At first such recruits were treated as an inferior order; but eventually, as the nomads dropped the primitive customs of the desert and mixed with the native population, maintenance of the old distinctions became impossible. The religion, language, and to some extent the traits of the conquerors came to be shared by the inhabitants of a vast region, and although the latter were not Arabs like the Bedouins who had remained in the homeland, their

culture may properly be called Arabic. The Romans of the principate were by no means all descended from citizens of the ancient state on the Tiber; what is known as Latin culture was largely Hellenic by origin. Even if the Arabs borrowed much from Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Hindus, the civilization which they developed truly reflected their own genius and ranks as one of the greatest contributions made by any people in history.

The  
weakening  
of the  
Omniad  
caliphate

Fuller discussion of this subject must be postponed until a later chapter, for at present we are dealing merely with the earlier caliphate, which came to an end in 750. Although the Ommiads were still able to extend their dominions both to the east and to the west, it soon proved impossible to support the state from the profits of war and conquest. Consequently, the ancient freedom of true believers from all tribute was gradually restricted to an exemption from personal taxes, and lands were assessed without regard to the holders. Yet, while the Ommiads thus broadened the liability for taxation, they maintained the old tradition that the original Arabs constituted a ruling aristocracy. Political authority and social eminence remained virtual monopolies of a few families from Mecca and Medina—a policy which, coming more and more into conflict with the interests of the Moslem population, produced increasing discontent.

The  
Abbasid  
dynasty  
(750–1258)

As was to be expected, the opposition came to a head in Persia, where a deep antagonism to Syrian domination outlived the monarchy from which it had been inherited. There the prejudices of the Iranian population coincided with the ambitions of the Arab tribes who had momentarily enjoyed great prestige during the caliphate of Ali. And there the legitimist party naturally maintained its headquarters. By fanatics of this persuasion Ali and his son were glorified as holy martyrs, and various religious doctrines were turned into watchwords for the sacred cause of revenge. From time to time they launched insurrections, but none had any success until the Ommiad dynasty had come into general disrepute throughout the empire. Then a revolutionary movement, obscurely begun in the extreme east of Persia, suddenly swept everything before it. In 750 a certain Abu-l-Abbas, great-great-grandson of Mohammed's uncle, Abbas, was proclaimed caliph in Irak. The Ommiads and their friends were massacred and within a few years the capital of the Arab empire was moved to the newly built city of Bagdad on the Tigris—a momentous event for the history both of Islam and of Christendom.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WEST AFTER JUSTINIAN

#### I. THE MEROVINGIAN KINGDOM

BY THE time that the Arabs had swept across Africa to invade Spain and Gaul, two great powers had risen to a dominating position in western Europe: the Frankish kingdom and the Roman church. The former, as established by Clovis,<sup>1</sup> stopped considerably short of the Mediterranean coast, leaving the upper Rhone valley to the Burgundians, Provence to the Ostrogoths, and Septimania to the Visigoths. On the northeast, however, it reached well beyond the Rhine, for it included not only the ancient territory of the Ripuarian Franks, but also that of the Alamans. In the interior of Germany two important nations held lands adjoining those of the Franks. To the north were the Saxons; below them, between the Main and the Saale, the Thuringians. Along the upper Danube, in the old province of Rhætia, lived the remnants of the Alamans under the protection of the Ostrogoths, and down the river were situated the Bavarians, the Lombards, and the Gepids. On the death of Clovis in 511, his realm was divided among his four sons. They were an able, warlike, and unscrupulous lot. Like their father, they took whatever they could without the slightest regard for moral principles. Indeed, they respected each other's rights only through fear of each other's strength; when one of them died, his children were likely to be murdered and his domains to be seized by his brothers. Such details must here be passed over. By 558 the three elder Merovingians had perished; so the entire kingdom was reunited by Clotar (or Lothair), the youngest, who himself died in 561.

Territorial  
expansion  
under the  
sons of  
Clovis  
(511-61)

Meanwhile the Frankish dominion had been extended in various directions, for the royal brothers, in spite of their jealousies, generally cooperated for the sake of offensive war. Their first expedition, against the Burgundians in 523, broke the power of that kingdom, but was prevented from ultimate success by the intervention of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. So they turned to the side of Germany, where they subjugated the Thuringians and

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 74 f.



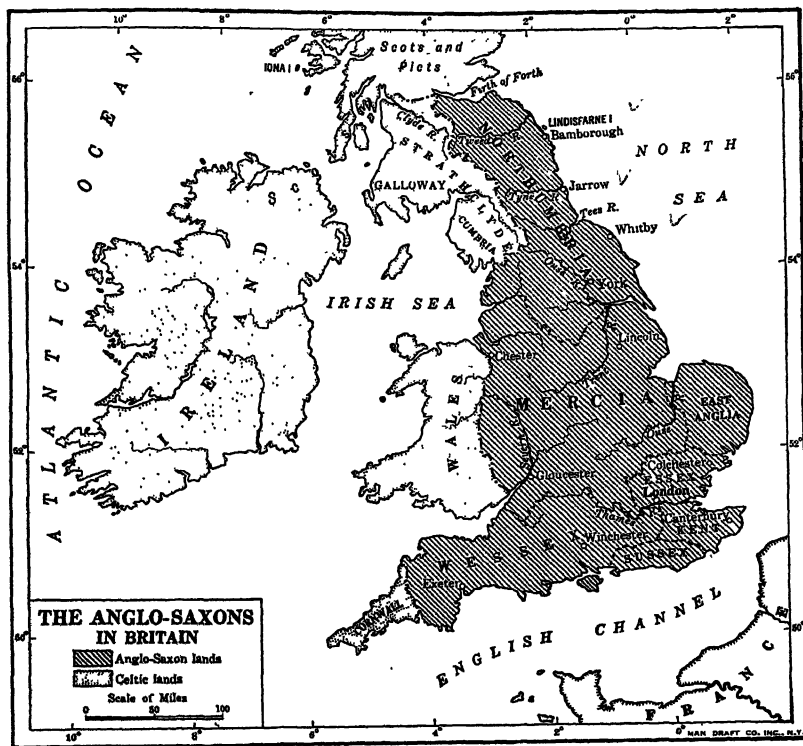
brought their supremacy as far east as the Slavic settlements on the upper Elbe. Then, as the Ostrogoths weakened after the death of Theodoric, the Merovingians once more directed their attention to the south. They definitely conquered Burgundy, and by threatening to ally with Justinian, they extorted from the Ostrogothic king all his territory on their side of the Alps. This arrangement resulted in the Frankish annexation of Provence and the extension of a Frankish protectorate over the Alamans and the Bavarians on the Danube. At that point they were checked by the Lombards, and in the opposite direction they failed to take Septimania from the Visigoths.

The  
Franks  
and their  
neighbors  
in the later  
sixth  
century

By the second half of the sixth century the Franks thus held important rank in the western world. They ruled almost all Gaul, together with a wide territory to the east of it. And their prominence tended to be enhanced by the evil fortunes that befell their greatest rivals. Both the Vandal and the Ostrogothic kingdoms were destroyed by Justinian. The Visigothic state persisted in Spain for well over another hundred years, but long before it was annihilated by the Moslems it had fallen into complete decay. Of the other Germanic peoples on the continent, only one was to play a leading part on Roman soil, namely, the Lombards, whose invasion of Italy will be considered in the following section. The Gepids were crushed by the Avars. The Bavarians, Alamans, and Thuringians recognized Frankish overlordship. The Saxons and the Frisians remained wild and heathen, like the Scandinavian peoples to the north. Even their kindred who had settled in Britain were as yet hardly touched by Latin civilization.

There the Anglo-Saxons had occupied the whole agricultural plain of the southwest and partitioned it into many small kingdoms: Northumbria, East Anglia, Mercia, Kent, and the East, Middle, South, and West Saxons (Essex, Middlesex, Sussex, and Wessex). In the highlands of the north lived the Picts, engaged in warfare with invading Scots from Ireland. The Picts were probably Celtic; the Scots were assuredly so, as were the Britons. The latter, called Welsh by the Anglo-Saxons, still held the rough country in the west of Britain; but as the West Saxons seized the valley of the Severn and the Mercians reached the sea at Chester, the Britons were driven into the three separate regions of Cornwall, Wales, and Strathclyde. Meanwhile, to escape destruction at the hands of the Germanic barbarians, numbers of Britons had crossed the Channel into the nearby Armor-

ican peninsula. Like the Welsh who stayed behind, they were rather Celtic tribesmen than Roman gentlemen; for even if their ancestors had possessed any Latin culture, it had been lost in the troubled century preceding. Into the westernmost part of Gaul the invaders thus brought the Celtic speech and customs which, despite the tremendous changes of subsequent ages, have



persisted down to the present. Brittany, as the land came to be named after its new inhabitants, thus became a country entirely foreign to the Merovingian kingdom.

That kingdom, as marked on the map, has an imposing appearance, but its grandeur should not be exaggerated. What little strength it possessed in the early sixth century quickly faded in the subsequent years. The decline began when Clotar, last surviving son of Clovis, partitioned the reunited kingdom among his four sons. Two of them, led by their wives, became involved

The decline of the Merovingians

in a bloody feud, which was perpetuated under their children and grandchildren. During this barbarous war the two rival courts, one at Metz and the other at Soissons, became the centers of two virtually independent principalities: Austrasia, so called because it lay to the *east*, and Neustria, the *newest* territory of the Franks. Even after the Neustrian ruler had finally exterminated the rival dynasty, Austrasia maintained its separate identity under the domination of the local aristocracy. Burgundy and Aquitaine had long been autonomous. On the Danube the Bavarians threw off the overlordship of the Franks and in Thuringia their control was at most a doubtful quantity. Meanwhile, too, the royal authority had become a mere sham. Dagobert (d. 639) was the last of the Merovingians who amounted to anything. Thenceforth the house of Clovis degenerated into a series of inconsequential puppets controlled by favorites.

Mero-  
vingian  
govern-  
ment

On the subject of the Merovingian government controversy once raged between the rival schools of Germanists and Romanists: the scholars who sought to derive everything important from the Germans and those who insisted on a Roman origin for all significant institutions. Today historians are inclined to regard the problem in a more sensible way—to explain the Frankish constitution as a haphazard combination of odds and ends, rather than a logical development of some one system. In general, however, it appears that the forms of the monarchy were Roman. The king was more of a despot than a simple barbarian chieftain, and he issued orders to a host of dignitaries with titles borrowed from the imperial court—chamberlains, seneschals, marshals, constables, and the like. For purposes of local administration the old Roman *civitas* was normally the unit employed, but in regions beyond the Rhine rural districts about important royal estates were substituted. In each of these units the king named a count (*comes* or *graf*) to carry out his orders and hold office during his pleasure. Upon the counts depended the stability of the whole political structure, for it was through them alone that the king could enforce his rights, which may be classified as judicial, military, and fiscal.

Justice

It is impossible to generalize with regard to the administration of justice, except to say that everything had come to depend on local custom.<sup>2</sup> The Merovingian king did not legislate like a

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 77.

Roman emperor, and it was only occasionally that he issued comprehensive instructions to his agents. Earlier princes had often promulgated codes for the settlement of disputes among the various groups of their subjects, but by the seventh century the old national distinctions had pretty well broken down. Whether a man was governed by the Roman law or by some variety of barbarian law—Frankish, Visigothic, or Burgundian—became largely a matter of accident. Each little region had its own usages administered by its own court. There, under the presidency of the count, judgments were rendered by a group of prominent landowners (*rachimburgi*) who knew what rules and penalties should be enforced. The character of this customary law varied according to the dominant tradition of the countryside: in the south it remained fundamentally Roman; in the north it was almost purely Germanic.

In connection with military obligations, too, the earlier contrast between Roman and barbarian disappeared under the Merovingians. In time of war the king treated all able-bodied men as Franks, liable for service when called. But he did not, of course, summon the whole force at one time; only the neighboring population was normally mustered for a particular campaign. The man in charge of such proceedings was usually a duke (*dux*), a high commander placed in charge of a wide territory—especially one on the frontier—and so given authority superior to that of many counts. Under this system the army could hardly be more than a haphazard collection of rudely armed infantry. In the sixth century, apparently, the Franks overcame their enemies through strength of numbers rather than through superiority of organization. It was not for another two hundred years that the Frankish host became an efficient body of cavalry able to meet the Saracens on even terms. The army

The financial structure of the Merovingian kingdom was exceedingly simple. Officials were paid no regular salaries; instead they were given landed estates from which to support themselves, together with a share of the revenues that they might collect for the king. The administration of justice was a source of income rather than an expense. Military service was exacted without remuneration, as were also necessary provisions, materials, transportation, and labor. As a whole, the government cost the king little in cash, and he was supposed to maintain his domestic establishment from the proceeds of his own estates. Finance

a consequence, the Merovingian state—if it can be honored with such a title—depended very little upon public taxes. And that was necessarily the case, for the imperial fiscal system had long since fallen in ruins.

Diocletian's taxes, of course, were never abolished. The scanty records of the Merovingian kings prove that they continued to enforce, as best they could, whatever rights came to them by Roman tradition. Yet, without an efficient governmental machine, it was impossible for them either to collect the old imposts or to assess new ones. As time passed, the direct taxes, both real and personal, tended to lose their original character altogether—to become a sort of rent owed from certain lands only or a charge on the heads of particular men, chiefly the unfree. On the other hand, the indirect taxes continued to be levied on highways, rivers, and coasts. But all these dues, with the acquisition by the aristocracy of special privileges and exemptions, ceased to be royal monopolies and came to be attached to many great estates. This weakening of the central government, accompanied by the fading out of distinctions between public and private rights, came to be a prominent characteristic of feudal society—a subject which will be given detailed treatment in a later connection.

Political  
and  
cultural  
decay

The Merovingian kingdom, although it perpetuated a number of imperial forms, was thus a poor imitation of the Roman state, even as that had been in its last stage of decadence. In the earlier period the Frankish monarchy seemed great and powerful chiefly through the ruthless energy of the kings. When they degenerated into the utter incompetents of the seventh century, their kingdom was shown to be a sprawling territory without cohesion or unity, inevitably doomed to disintegrate unless in some way the royal authority could be restored. Under such circumstances, Latin civilization in Gaul threatened to disappear altogether. The official documents issued by the king prove that his clerks were ignorant of the simplest grammatical rules. Their handwriting was a grotesque scrawl. Compared with the barbarism that prevailed under the later Merovingians, the culture of fifth-century Rome appears a golden age.

St.  
Gregory  
of Tours  
(538–94)

In the midst of the calamitous wars between Neustria and Austrasia lived Gregory, bishop of Tours from 573 to 594. His writings are our chief source for the political and ecclesiastical history of Gaul during the fifth and sixth centuries, but they are even more valuable for their revealing glimpses of contemporary

thought and morals. Gregory was born in 538 at Clermont in Auvergne. His family was one of the most distinguished in the province, being of senatorial rank and carrying the tradition of high office in both state and church. The boy, in preparation for an ecclesiastical career, was given the best education then available, and in 563 he was ordained deacon. Shortly afterwards, seeking a cure for his chronic ill health, he went to the famous shrine of St. Martin at Tours. While living in that city, he won the reputation for holiness and all-round ability that led to his election as bishop.

During his pontificate of twenty-one years Gregory was prominent in local politics, and on many occasions came into direct contact with the rival kings and queens of the Merovingian house. His devotion, however, was primarily given to the church, and it was in this interest that he composed his famous books: the *History of the Franks*, the *Miracles of St. Martin*, and various other essays and biographies. At first, he tells us, he was loath to undertake literary endeavors because he realized the inferiority of his Latin. Grammar, he confesses, he had never been able to master: he could be sure neither of genders nor of cases. As a rhetorician, he was at most a "stolid ox." Yet he found encouragement in the thought that, even because his writing was crude, it would be understood by all readers, and that he could best serve God by not trying to be other than he was. By descent a Roman gentleman, Gregory thus chose to lead a useful life rather than to sink himself in a dead world of tradition. For his honesty and sincerity, for his simplicity and enthusiasm, the historian as well as the clergyman must be intensely grateful.

Gregory's  
*History  
of the  
Franks*

In his own story Gregory well illustrates the decay of learning among the aristocracy, the brutality of the life to which its members had become accustomed, and the complete dominance of the church over the minds of the educated. His naïve attitude toward the deeds of Clovis has already been noted,<sup>3</sup> and it is characteristic of the author. In his eyes the outward acceptance of the orthodox faith served to excuse what would otherwise be the blackest iniquity. He was inclined to interpret all events, even the most absurd trivialities, as evidence of supernatural intervention, either divine or diabolic. Although much of his history is extremely valuable as a graphic picture of contemporary society, it

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 74 f.

is full of edifying anecdotes. With regard to the efficacy of holy relics, his faith was boundless. He had the utmost scorn for scientific medicine, preferring to the prescriptions of physicians the marvelous powers of St. Martin. A drink mixed with dust from the holy man's sepulcher Gregory found a sovereign remedy for ailments of the stomach. Licking the rail in front of the tomb cured a sore tongue; the cloth that hung there, when rubbed on the throat, removed a troublesome fishbone. Objects taken from the sacred environment would allay fevers, cast out devils, prevent storms, and perform many other wonders. In all such matters Gregory was the child of his time—that which we know as the Dark Age.

## 2. THE LOMBARDS AND GREGORY THE GREAT

The  
Byzantine  
adminis-  
tration

Immediately after his first success in Italy, Justinian proclaimed the restoration of the old imperial government, with its sharp separation of civil and military authority. But as the Gothic war persisted, that method of administration proved quite impractical, and the commander of the army, Narses, was given complete control of the government, with subordinate generals (*duces*) in charge of the provinces into which the peninsula was divided. Even after the death of Justinian in 565, followed by the recall of Narses in 567, the arrangement still continued. The supreme representative of the emperor was styled the exarch, with headquarters at Ravenna. This city together with the surrounding territory, was thenceforth known as the exarchate; the other districts, now permanently organized, were called duchies (*ducatus*). That the military system thus came to be perpetuated was due to the Lombard invasion, which produced a state of chronic warfare.

The  
Lombard  
invasion  
of Italy  
(568)

Only a few facts are known concerning the earlier history of the Lombards. At one time they had been neighbors of the Saxons in the lower valley of the Elbe, but by the later fifth century they had established themselves on the Danube between the Bavarians and the Gepids. Although nominally converted to Arian Christianity, they still had the reputation of being utterly savage, and for that reason were especially sought as recruits for the Byzantine army.<sup>4</sup> The greatest victories of Narses were, indeed, largely won with Lombard auxiliaries. Then the Avars

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 108.





power was broken and the emperors were distracted by hostilities on many fronts, was easy prey for any horde that chose to take it. The Italians were probably fortunate that their visitors were Lombards rather than Avars.

The story of the Lombard conquest is a very famous one. With its romantic plot and gory details, it has been told and retold in countless books. What has not been so frequently emphasized is the fact that it is almost wholly taken from the pages of Paul the Deacon,<sup>5</sup> who lived over two hundred years later and has been proved generally unreliable. It is impossible, therefore, to be sure of anything in this connection beyond the meager series of events attested by contemporary sources. In 568 the Lombard king, Alboin, led his people into the fertile valley of the Po. This region he easily conquered from the weakening Byzantine government, and it has since been known as Lombardy. But Alboin's reign was cut short by assassination, as was that of his successor; whereupon the Lombard nobles decided to dispense with a king, and none was elected for ten years or so. Then, through fear of the Franks, the monarchy was revived about the year 584, after which the crown passed, often by usurpation and murder, to a long series of rulers.

The extent  
of the  
Lombard  
conquests

Meanwhile various Lombard chiefs, with their respective bands, had penetrated far into the peninsula. There they set up a series of principalities which, in imitation of the Byzantine system, came to be called duchies. The Lombard dukes, however, were very slightly, if at all, under the control of the king. And the imperial power was now reduced to a collection of scattered provinces, isolated from each other as well as from Constantinople. Of these the exarchate of Ravenna was the most important. To the north of it, along the marshy estuaries of the rivers, extended the duchy of Venetia, where the great city of Venice was yet to arise; and at the head of the Adriatic the Byzantines also held the peninsula of Istria, with the city of Trieste. Adjoining the exarchate on the south they had the region known as Pentapolis, but this territory was widely separated from their other possessions: Apulia, Calabria, Sicily, the duchy of Naples, the duchy of Rome, and, in the extreme north, the coast of Liguria, with the city of Genoa.

A glance at the map will show that the empire thus kept all

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 223.

the great seaports, leaving to the Lombards the interior of the peninsula and the less important coasts. Their kingdom, as we have seen, consisted primarily of the Po Valley; but even this region was really controlled by the local counts, who are said to have numbered over thirty and who, like those of Gaul, had for centers of their administration the outstanding Roman cities. Although the kingdom extended south of the Apennines over Tuscany, the royal authority was weaker there than in Lombardy. And the four great duchies of Trent, Friuli, Benevento, and Spoleto were independent principalities in everything except name. Under such circumstances, it is quite evident that the Lombard kingdom possessed few of the attributes that we consider essential to the existence of a true state. Again we discover the forms of Roman law serving to mask a very crude barbarian exploitation. In fact, what has already been said of the Merovingian monarchy can be applied, with the change of a few names, to that of the Lombards in Italy.

Of infinitely greater significance for the future of Europe was the contemporary development of the Roman church. The papal theory had been eloquently promulgated by Leo the Great in the fifth century. Yet, in spite of occasional deference to Rome, the doctrine in its entirety had never been accepted by the four great eastern patriarchs: those of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. A hundred years after Leo the situation remained unchanged, except that the issue had been somewhat sharpened through the emperors' attempts to enforce their own authority. On the other hand, all opposition to the papal claims had ended with the barbarian invasions. Then, in the next century, a series of Asiatic conquests revolutionized the course of events in Syria and Egypt. Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria — three great apostolic foundations — were submerged by the hosts of Islam. And as they lost all prominence in the Christian world, there remained as the rival of Rome only Constantinople, an upstart city with a church that was great only through imperial patronage.

Gregory  
the Great  
(590-604)

Halfway in point of time between Justinian and Mohammed the see of St. Peter was held by the eminent statesman and teacher, Pope Gregory I. He was born about the year 540 of a noble and wealthy Roman family, one which had long been distinguished in both church and state. Of his youth nothing is definitely known, except that he received a good education in

Latin grammar and rhetoric; of Greek he remained entirely ignorant. As he grew to manhood, he witnessed the final phase of the Gothic war, the last gloomy years of Justinian's reign, and the invasion of Italy by the Lombards. During this time Gregory apparently worked through the lower grades of a political career, for in 573 he appears as prefect of Rome—the highest municipal office in the city. But within a year or so he had resigned his honors, given his fortune to charity, converted his family mansion into a monastery, and there become one of the brothers, presumably under the rule just composed by the famous Benedict of Nursia.

Rome and  
Constantinople

It was about 578 that Gregory was called from his retreat to be ordained deacon at Rome, and not long afterwards he was sent as papal ambassador to Constantinople. The period was one of critical importance for the papacy. The popes had found the Byzantine conquest by no means an unmixed blessing; under Justinian they had enjoyed less toleration than under the Arian Ostrogoths. Even after the death of that willful emperor they remained in an uncomfortable position. To submit to eastern opinion and modify the canons of Chalcedon was to lose the support of the west; to refuse to do so was to invite imperial persecution. Nevertheless, for a pope unwilling to renounce moral grandeur the way was clear. What could he do but follow the tradition of Leo the Great? And as it turned out, this decision was made easier by the Lombard invasion. Although the Lombards were heretics as well as savage barbarians, they constituted an effective counterpoise to the ambitions of the emperor. The logic of the situation inevitably suggested that the papacy, to assure its necessary independence, play off one potential enemy against the other.

Whether or not Gregory appreciated this truth when he went to Constantinople, he did so after a residence there of about seven years. Officially, his mission—to secure imperial aid against the Lombards—was a complete failure. The emperor Maurice,<sup>6</sup> preoccupied with wars against the Avars and the Persians, could or would do nothing for Italy. That country, Gregory discovered, must work out its own salvation—a conviction that he brought back with him to Rome and ultimately made the corner-stone of the papal policy. For a while, however, he again retired to his

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 114.

monastery, this time as abbot. Then, on the death of the pope in 590, Gregory was unanimously raised to the vacant see. His reluctance to assume authority was not the conventional modesty of the bishop elect, for he always regretted the years of his abbacy as the happiest of his life. Yet, if ever a man was fitted by birth, training, and capacity for the office to which he was elevated, it was Gregory. During the fourteen years of his pontificate the nobility of his ideals, combined with his rare practical wisdom, brought the Petrine supremacy from the realm of theory to that of actuality. With him the papacy may be said to have become definitely a world power.

While Gregory always maintained a formal attitude of deep respect toward the emperor, this did not prevent his following a policy that at times verged on insubordination. By an edict of Justinian, the bishops throughout Italy had been associated with imperial officials in the work of local administration. Then came the Lombard advance, and since it cut off Rome from the exarchate, the pope was left *de facto* ruler of his capital. With or without special authorization, Gregory proceeded to assume responsibility for the defense of the city. Indeed, he went so far as to negotiate a truce with the Lombard king and to advise the emperor that it should at once be extended into a permanent settlement. For this action he was severely reprimanded by Maurice in what Gregory regarded as an insulting letter. His reply was, to say the least, frank. He virtually accused the emperor of negligence in the handling of Italian affairs, and it was characteristic of the age that the government was too feeble to take action against him. Finally, after a more capable exarch had been sent to Ravenna, Gregory's policy was officially adopted. In 599 general peace was signed with the Lombards, recognizing their title to the lands which they had so long occupied.

Gregory's  
Lombard  
policy

In his dealings with the prelates of the east, Gregory could do little more than reiterate a claim to sole headship for the see of St. Peter. In the west, on the other hand, his superior authority was not merely asserted but actually enforced. Throughout Italy, except for a few refractory bishops in the north, the papal will was generally recognized, both within and without the Lombard territory. In Africa, likewise, Gregory's supervision of all major ecclesiastical affairs was constant and efficient. Nor was there any question of the papal supremacy in Gaul. The trouble there was to maintain even a semblance of Christian unity and disci-

The papal  
supremacy  
in the west

pline when the Frankish kings, plunged in murderous feuds, appointed and controlled the local clergy to suit their own selfish interests. It was largely in vain that Gregory preached reform of public or private morals to the Merovingians and their bishops; yet it was not without consequence that the cause of idealism was identified in the minds of the more intelligent Franks with that of papal intervention. And in Spain, meanwhile, Gregory won a great triumph through the conversion to the orthodox faith of Recared, king of the Visigoths—an event followed by general submission to the papal authority throughout the country.

The  
Patrimony  
of St.  
Peter

Gregory's famous mission to Britain was of even greater significance; but this subject, together with his interest in the advancement of monasticism, will be separately treated below. The result of his labors in many directions was to give the papacy the international character that it was to maintain in the succeeding ages. Being actually independent of such transitory factors as imperial residence or political favoritism, it could logically assert a universal authority transcending all temporal arrangements. The practical Gregory, however, saw that, to preserve this fortunate status, the papacy must be put on a sound economic basis. Scattered throughout Italy and the other western provinces lay the estates that constituted the Patrimony of St. Peter—chiefly lands donated to the Roman church by pious benefactors. Under Gregory the administration of this property was brought to a new state of efficiency. Although some of it was leased to tenant farmers, the greater part was worked directly by the church through stewards, almost always clergymen, appointed by the pope. Gregory's correspondence reveals the meticulous care with which he looked after each source of income, whether fields, domestic animals, or peasant cultivators. His attention to detail is nothing short of amazing. While engaged in multifarious projects of world-wide interest, he still found time to issue specific instructions to his agents concerning everything that they were supposed to do—from the supervision of agricultural routine to matters of poor relief and reports on the conduct of local ecclesiastics. Gregory, in fact, was a model landlord—ever watchful of legal obligations and material resources, but always just, charitable, and humane.

Gregory's  
writings

Even yet we have not reached the contributions for which Gregory enjoyed the greatest fame in the Middle Ages. As a statesman and administrator his influence was profound and last-

ing, but in these respects his personality became merged in the dominant tradition of the papacy. As an author, however, Gregory remained an individual, loved and revered by countless millions, both learned and unlearned. Among the four Doctors of Latin Christianity<sup>7</sup> he was beyond question the most popular. For scholarship in itself Gregory cared nothing, and for conventional literary style he expressed positive dislike. The simplicity of his writing was the result not so much of ignorance as of conscious effort. His books, like his acts, were wholly governed by practical considerations. He composed them for the average reader of his day and—as it happened—of many centuries to come. In the succeeding age, though all students continued to admire the towering genius of Augustine, few could understand what he had written. Everybody who could understand Latin could understand Gregory.

One of the great pope's most widely read books was that entitled *Pastoral Care*—a manual on the character and duties of the bishop, which he wrote shortly after his elevation to the papacy. No ordinary man, says Gregory, should be chosen for so responsible a task. The bishop must be a trained man, but along with his learning he should possess spiritual purity, despising all pleasures of the flesh and all goods of this world. Especially to be shunned is the man who seeks ecclesiastical preferment through ambition, or the man whose erudition is the cloak of pride and viciousness. The bishop is the pastor of the flock, who must teach by example as well as by words; the physician of souls, who must himself enjoy the health that he tries to share with others. To be a successful ruler, he should above all have a broad and sympathetic understanding of human nature, so that he may be able to distinguish one kind of people from another and to vary his instruction to suit the needs of each. Gregory enumerates no less than thirty-six distinctions of this sort, and then devotes a chapter to the admonitions that must be given to each pair of opposites: such as men and women, masters and servants, prelates and subordinates, the rich and the poor, the joyful and the sad, the wise and the foolish, the sick and the well, the impudent and the bashful, the gluttonous and the abstinent. This is the meat of the book—practical advice from a practical man who was himself a distinguished bishop.

The  
*Pastoral  
Care*

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 97.

The  
*Homilies*

In the *Pastoral Care* preaching is emphasized as one of the chief episcopal duties, and in this respect as in others Gregory provided a model for future generations. His sermons were enormously popular not only when they were delivered, but also in their published form, as *Homilies* on the Scriptures. These were simple discourses to explain texts from the Bible and through them to present the lessons of Christianity. Devoid of all florid rhetoric, they spoke plainly for the edification of plain people. Gregory had a talent for direct and forceful statement, which—despite the pseudo-classic tradition—was then as now the best form of eloquence. And to drive home a moral, he adopted the unconventional device of the pious anecdote. Thus the popular story of saint or of sinner was introduced to formal ecclesiastical literature, and another precedent of great significance was set for the Middle Ages.

The  
*Dialogues*

This same vein was further developed by Gregory in his remarkable *Dialogues*. As the name implies, the author expounds his subject by means of a conversation with a friend—one Peter, who combines extraordinary curiosity with a rather slow wit, and so is made to represent the audience for whose instruction the volume is compiled. Aside from the slender continuity thus provided, the *Dialogues* are a collection of marvelous stories concerning holy men and women, to illustrate the ever present power of God—and of the devil—in daily life. The entire second book is devoted to St. Benedict of Nursia and constitutes, as noted above, the earliest biography of that illustrious monk. Yet, like the first and third books, it resolves itself into a series of visions and other miracles. The fourth book tells how various persons, both good and bad, met death, and seeks by such examples to demonstrate the immortality of the soul.

Gregory's honesty in reporting these tales of the supernatural is, of course, unquestioned. The extent to which they are to be believed is a matter of faith, not of historical evidence, for most of them are presented merely on the basis of traditional knowledge. Students of history are interested in these narratives primarily because they reflect the convictions of the early Middle Ages, when everybody constantly expected and discovered miraculous events in everyday life. Gregory the Great, like all educated Europeans of the time, was inclined to explain almost any occurrence as the result either of divine or of satanic influence. Gregory's book—and it is only one of many similar compositions—

relates a profusion of marvels. There are literally scores of apparitions, prophecies, ecstatic visions, and raisings from the dead, as well as miraculous cures, inventions, and deeds of all kinds. Gregory tells of streams that changed their beds at saintly command; of birds, beasts, and serpents that fulfilled commissions given them by holy men; of wicked magicians, haunted houses, and disembodied ghosts; of demons who appeared on all sorts of occasions and in all sorts of guises. The catalogue of diabolic pranks and priestly remedies is rich and varied. To be appreciated however, the stories must be read in full.

Much Christian doctrine, obviously, is woven into the *Dialogues*, but Gregory's chief work in the realm of theology is that called the *Moralia*, a commentary on the book of Job. Although neither his method of exposition nor the conclusions which he drew were invented by the author, the book brought into absolute clarity much that had been obscure in the earlier sources. Here, for example, appeared in complete form the allegorical system of Biblical interpretation that was to remain fundamental to all mediæval scholasticism. To Gregory the entire Old Testament contained a hidden prophecy of the New Testament. The books of the Hebrews, to be sure, were valuable for their literal message; yet they were infinitely more valuable for the mystic revelation that underlay the superficial meaning of the words. To understand the former was a task for the comparatively simple; appreciation of the latter was the test of true wisdom. And this wisdom, it should be noted, was not something which the individual could secure through his unaided faculties. Without the sacred tradition of the church he was powerless to discover the truth.

The  
*Moralia*

This is the starting-point of Gregory's entire exposition of Christianity. Although violent controversy still rages over the precise origin of various doctrines and usages of the mediæval church, every one must admit that, at least in large part, they go back to Gregory the Great, and that he did no more than restate the established beliefs of his day. Most of his theology he took from the massive works of St. Augustine; other ideas, which his own writings emphasized for the first time, he evidently adopted from oral tradition—a procedure which must seem entirely logical and right to one who accepts that tradition as itself inspired. In Gregory's works we accordingly find definite presentation of such mediæval beliefs as the constant intervention in human life of angels and demons, the efficacy of prayers to the saints, the

Gregory's  
theology



sacrificial nature of the eucharist, and the purification in purgatory of men who fail to perform adequate penance in this life. These doctrines illustrate one phase of Gregory's remarkable mentality. Whether or not we believe what he believed, we must recognize the commanding greatness of a man who could be eminent, not only as a monk and a bishop, but also as a statesman, an administrator, and a writer.

### 3. THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

The conversion  
of the  
Irish

From the testimony of archæology, as well as of written sources, we may be certain that Christianity was introduced into Britain during the time of the Roman occupation, but the extent of its progress remains doubtful. It is probable that the faith had been adopted by only a minority of the population before the province was abandoned to the barbarians. The Anglo-Saxon invaders were entirely heathen, and, as the result of their conquests, the British church was broken and isolated from the continent. Latin civilization suffered a complete collapse. In the meantime, a famous British missionary had undertaken the conversion of the Irish—or Scots, as they were then called—in the neighboring island.

St. Patrick  
(d. 461)

The future St. Patrick—according to the traditional story, which is now accepted by most historians—was born in Britain of Christian parents about 389 and originally named Sucat. As a youth he was taken by Irish pirates and held captive by them for six years. Having then effected his escape by means of a ship bound for Gaul, he became a monk at Lérins, the most prominent of the pre-Benedictine monasteries in that country. Later he was ordained deacon at Auxerre, where he passed many years in the service of the local church, being now called by a Latin name, Patricius. But his great desire was to carry the gospel to the wild people who had enslaved him, and finally, in 432, he was consecrated bishop and formally dispatched on a mission to Ireland. Spending there the rest of his long life, he had the satisfaction of seeing the bulk of the people enrolled under the standard of the Cross. Until Patrick's advent, Christianity had made slight headway in the island; henceforth it was to have an organized church, the fame of which soon extended throughout the western world.

From the beginning this church seems to have been peculiar in

many ways. Irish life was still dominated by the tribal system; the population was divided into a large number of clans, each under a petty king. When such a chief was converted, his followers were normally converted along with him; so the clan became also the unit of ecclesiastical government. And as the missionaries were monks, the center of all Christian activity remained the monastery, which, being of the Egyptian type, was really a colony of hermits. The abbot acted also as archbishop and consecrated a large number of lesser bishops to attend to the work of the church among the people. Other monks devoted themselves to study and teaching—to such good effect that, between the sixth and the eighth centuries, the Irish monasteries were renowned for their learning throughout the entire west of Europe. While Gregory the Great at Rome was ignorant of Greek, it was being read in a savage country that had never been part of the empire! The Irish monks, it is true, made few original contributions in the field of thought, but they well appreciated the importance of preserving what had been handed down to them. Their manuscripts are among the most beautiful ever produced. Written in clear and handsome characters, such works were also decorated with amazing skill. The delicate tracery and lovely coloring of a manuscript like the *Book of Kells* (eighth century) were rivaled at the time only by the designs of oriental artists—a fact indicating obscure monastic connections with Egypt and Syria.

Among all their activities, however, the Irish monks continued to be preeminent for austerity and religious enthusiasm. They were great travelers, seeking by choice the wildest and most inaccessible places. The barren islets of the adjoining seas became dotted with the cells of holy men, who prided themselves on facing one of the world's most disagreeable climates without even the comfort of a fire. All of them, however, were not satisfied with a purely contemplative life. In 563 one Columba, who had already helped to found several monastic communities in his native land, established himself with a band of companions on the island of Iona. There, eventually, arose a great monastery which served as headquarters for the Christianization of the nearby British coasts. Under Irish influence the church was revived and reorganized in Wales. (And through Columba's own efforts, the faith was carried to the Welsh of Strathclyde, to the Scots of Galloway, and beyond them to the Picts.) Nor was it

The church in Ireland

St. Columba (521-97) and his British mission

strange, after such developments, that missionaries from the west should penetrate into the adjacent kingdom of Northumbria. Thither<sup>1</sup> from Iona came the pious and learned Aidan (d. 651) who, following the Irish custom, combined the offices of abbot and bishop. His Holy Island (Lindisfarne) was made into a center like that which earlier had been his home.

As the Irish missionaries pushed their activities among all the Celtic peoples, they inevitably reached Brittany, and from there it was easy to see that much work remained to be done throughout the Merovingian dominions. In many regions the Franks, though nominally converted to Christianity, remained wholly barbarous. Often the priests were hardly better than their parishioners. And in the Germanic lands to the east the population was still largely heathen. Such was the environment found by Columban, the renowned disciple of Columba. Settling as a hermit in Burgundy about the year 585, he soon attracted enough followers to establish several monasteries, of which the most famous was at Luxeuil. Thence the influence of his monks quickly extended in all directions; for most of them, like their brethren in the British Isles, were not content with a cloistered existence but insisted on playing an active part among the people. This, of course, led to bitter remonstrance on the part of the secular clergy, and through their favor at various royal courts, they brought persecution upon the saintly leader.

Columban, driven from Luxeuil, eventually made his way to the shores of Lake Constance, where he preached for a time to the Alamans, and where a great monastery came to bear the name of his disciple, St. Gall. Before long Columban was again forced to move, and this time he sought a quiet refuge in Italy. At Bobbio, on the slopes of the Apennines, he founded the last of his monasteries and there he died in 615. By that time many religious communities had come to follow his rule, and for a century or so their number continued to increase. Columban's system naturally embodied the peculiar features of Celtic monasticism already noted—an extremely austere discipline combined with remarkable freedom for the individual. These hermit priests, as long as they kept the zeal of fresh converts, maintained a high standard of Christian conduct; but would such a lax organization be practical in a less idealistic age? And how could it be reconciled with the established government of the western church? The influence of the Celtic monks was to prove of

St.  
Columban  
(543-615)  
and his  
continental  
mission

lasting importance for the development of European culture, yet ultimately their system yielded to that of Benedict.

From Rome, in the meantime, had been launched a missionary enterprise which was eventually to absorb and surpass that of the Irish. Bede, the great English scholar of the eighth century,<sup>8</sup> tells how Gregory, before he became pope, saw some Northumbrian boys in the slave market at Rome and so became fired with ambition to Christianize their country. Whatever may be thought of that popular legend, there can be no question of Gregory's interest in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. The opportunity for action arose toward the end of the sixth century, when Æthelbert, king of Kent and overlord of various other regions, married Bertha, a Merovingian princess. She, of course, was a Christian, and it was stipulated that she might bring with her a Frankish bishop. The man whom she chose, however, lacked the talent for missionary endeavor; and since nothing more could be expected from the clergy of Gaul, the pope decided that the time was ripe for his intervention.

Gregory's  
mission  
to Britain

Gregory had begun his ecclesiastical career as a monk and had spent several years as abbot. Though later called on to serve the church in the world, he remained an ardent champion of monasticism and devoted much care to the founding of new religious communities and the reform of old ones. To him, as is proved by his letters on the subject, the monastic ideal was that of St. Benedict. Gregory held that a monk should stay in his monastery unless specially authorized to leave by his abbot and by the bishop of the local diocese; only under such circumstances could he share the work of the secular clergy. And if a priest wished to take the vows, he should surrender his parish and submit to monastic discipline like the rest of the brothers. The two callings, for the good of both, had to be kept distinct. The pope, therefore, while applauding the Christian zeal of the Irish, disapproved of their lax organization. His dispatch of Roman missionaries to Britain was an epoch-making event not only for the Anglo-Saxons, but for the entire western world.

The story of this mission and its results must be very briefly summarized. In 596 Gregory sent to Britain a group of Benedictine monks, headed by Augustine, from Gregory's own monastery in Rome. In 597 they arrived at Canterbury, the old

<sup>8</sup> See below, pp. 220 f.

The con-  
version  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons

Roman city which now served as Æthelbert's capital. Within a short time the king had been converted and Kent had become the first Christian state of the Anglo-Saxons. Thence the Gospel was carried to the neighboring kingdoms, but many years passed before all of them accepted it. Mercia, under the staunch heathen, Penda, offered especially stubborn resistance, and his victories counteracted an earlier success of the Romans in Northumbria. In 655, however, Penda was killed in battle by Oswy of Northumbria, and the extension of his overlordship marked also the final triumph of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons. Meanwhile Aidan and his Celtic monks had established themselves in the northern kingdom and Oswy was faced with the embarrassing task of choosing between two rival Christian churches.

The fundamental antagonism of the Roman and the Irish ecclesiastical systems has been emphasized above. It was inevitable that the party which supported the one would refuse all compromise with that which supported the other. Instead of using the round tonsure that was now customary, the Celtic monks shaved the front of the head from ear to ear. They also fixed the date of Easter by a computation that had elsewhere been abandoned. These practices, however, were mere symbols of independence; the great issue before Oswy was whether his people should or should not be enrolled in the great church that looked to Rome for its leadership. To settle that question, the king summoned to the monastery of Whitby in 664 a council of clergy and laymen, and, after long argument by the representatives of both sides, decision was rendered in favor of Rome. The Irish thereupon left Northumbria and all the Anglo-Saxons were brought within one church.

Ecclesi-  
astical  
organiza-  
tion of  
Britain

It had been Gregory's original intention to divide Britain between two metropolitans, one at London and one at York. London, however, proved inhospitable and so Augustine, having returned to Gaul for consecration, was installed as archbishop at Canterbury. Although much credit is due him for the establishment of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, the enterprise from the outset was planned and directed by the pope. Gregory's correspondence in this connection remains a monument of political wisdom as well as of religious zeal. Augustine was advised to convert heathen temples into Christian churches rather than to destroy them, and, whenever possible, to adapt heathen practices to the celebration of Christian festivals. "For," said Gregory,

"it is undoubtedly impossible to root out everything at once from savage hearts; he who wishes to ascend a height must mount, not by leaps, but step by step."

Gregory did not, of course, live to see more than the victory of his church in Kent; it was only after the Council of Whitby that the Roman ecclesiastical system was extended throughout the other kingdoms. The man chiefly responsible for this accomplishment was Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop of Canterbury from 669 to 690—the first prelate of that see to enforce his authority as primate of Anglo-Saxon Britain. Although York remained the head of an ecclesiastical province, its archbishop was treated by Theodore as a subordinate. The pontificate of Theodore may thus be said to have ended the period of missionary effort and begun that of permanent organization. In his day the Celtic lands still maintained their peculiarities, but by the end of the next century general conformity to Roman practice—at least in superficial matters—had been established, and more complete subjection to papal authority inevitably accompanied the political changes of the subsequent age.

For the continent, too, the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms was to have momentous consequences. As the influence of the Celtic monks in their own country yielded before that of the Roman missionaries, it became impossible for Columban's foundations to maintain their original independence. By the end of the seventh century the Benedictine system, with the powerful backing of the papacy, had definitely gained supremacy in western Europe. And by that same time the work of spreading the Gospel to heathen lands had come under the direction of Anglo-Saxon monks, acting as zealous agents of the pope. About 690 Willibrord, a Northumbrian educated in Ireland, undertook the task of converting the Frisians, who inhabited the estuary of the Rhine between the Franks and the Saxons. He was so successful that some five years later he was summoned to Rome and there consecrated bishop of Utrecht under the name of Clemens.

Anglo-Saxon monks on the continent

Shortly before Willibrord's death he was joined in Frisia by a man destined to win even greater renown. This was Winfrid, a West Saxon monk, who had felt the urge to quit the career of a learned recluse for that of a missionary among the heathen. But Winfrid's stay in Frisia was brief. Having—under the name of Boniface—secured direct authorization from the pope in 719, he betook himself to eastern Austrasia, where he soon

St.  
Boniface  
(680-754)  
and the  
ecclesi-  
astical  
organiza-  
tion of  
Germany

reported thousands of converts among the Thuringians and other Germanic peoples.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto all effort toward Christianizing these regions had been sporadic. Irish monks and other volunteers had founded monasteries and local churches without the slightest supervision on the part of any central authority, for the chaotic conditions that prevailed throughout the Merovingian dominions had prevented any decisive action from the monarchy. In such an environment Boniface, as he is always known, showed a superlative genius for organization. In the name of the pope, he created a unified ecclesiastical system for this entire East Frankish territory. Older monasteries were reformed and new ones established on all sides—chief among them the illustrious Fulda. Bavaria and Thuringia, together with the adjacent country, were divided into bishoprics and placed under the archbishop of Mainz—an office eventually held by Boniface himself. Yet, as an old man of seventy-four he still longed for a fresh world to conquer. Resigning his see, he resumed his missionary career among the Frisians and was there slain by heathen pirates in 754.

As Augustine had begun a new epoch for Britain, so Boniface—a product of the earlier mission—began a new epoch for Germany. A century and a half of European history serves as a commentary on the surpassing wisdom of Pope Gregory I.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

#### I. THE RISE OF THE CAROLINGIANS

IN 639 occurred the death of Dagobert, great-great-grandson of Clovis, and with him seemed to die the last spark of Merovingian ability. Henceforth the members of the royal house ceased to play any part in the world of affairs; they became *rois fainéants*—kings in name only, who spent their lives in seclusion and were hardly seen by their subjects except when, like long-haired dolls, they were drawn in their regal ox-carts from one estate to another. As a lot, they were pampered weaklings, dying young and leaving other weaklings to succeed them. For over a century, accordingly, while the crown was still worn by the members of one dynasty, all real authority was exercised by their chief ministers, whom we know as mayors of the palace.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the exact origin of the office, there can be no doubt that its greatness depended on control of the royal resources. By the seventh century the mayor of the palace, in any of the Merovingian kingdoms, was not merely the chief officer of the household, but also head of the entire government, and he usually commanded the army in person.

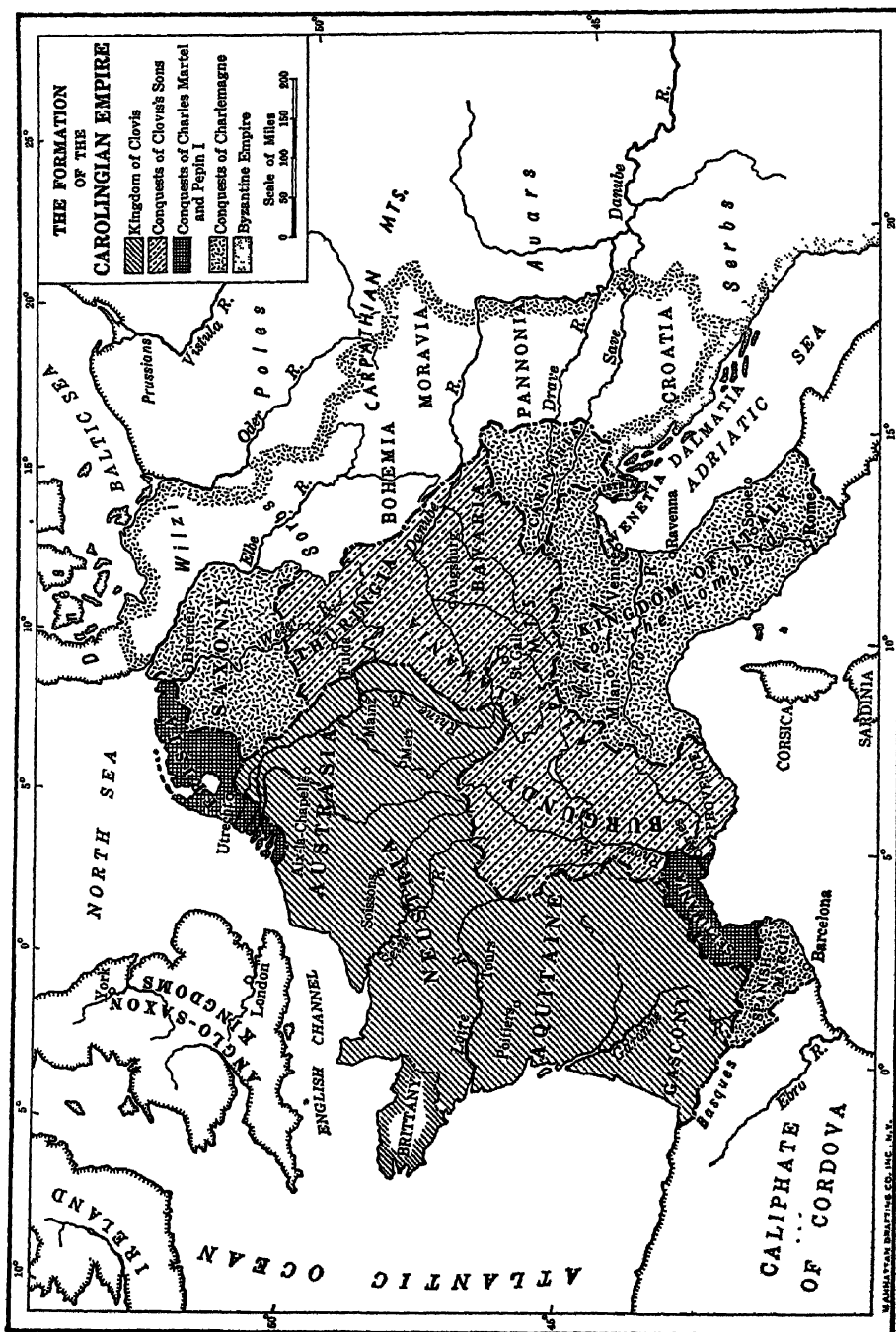
The Austrasian mayors of the palace

The house that was to be called Carolingian, after its most distinguished member, began its brilliant career in Austrasia. There, in the time of Dagobert, a certain great landlord named Pepin acted as mayor of the palace, and his descendents were ultimately able to make the honor hereditary. For a considerable time their rivals at home and in the other kingdoms kept them in comparative obscurity. Then Pepin II, grandson of Pepin I, crushed the Neustrian mayor in battle (687) and made himself supreme in both regions. This proved to be the opening of a new epoch in Frankish history, for it brought under one strong ruler the two main fragments of the Merovingian domain. Pepin's success was given permanence by the deeds of his remarkable son, Charles. The latter, though illegitimate, made good a doubtful claim to his father's office through a display of energy and determination

Charles Martel (714-41)

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 156. The Latin is *maior domus*, which is more literally represented by the expression "major-domo."





that the age sorely needed. Having speedily forced recognition in Neustria, Aquitaine, and Burgundy, he again subjected the Alamans and the Bavarians to Frankish dominion. And by actively supporting the work of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries beyond the Rhine, Charles secured three great advantages: Christianity was spread to the heathen, the cause of the monarchy was advanced in Germany, and his own family was endeared to the papacy.

In the midst of these significant projects, the Austrasian mayor was compelled to divert his attention to southern Gaul, where in 720 the Moors had crossed the Pyrenees to complete the conquest of the Visigothic provinces. From Septimania, following their usual practice, they sent raids into all the adjoining regions. In 732, having utterly defeated the duke of Aquitaine, they laid siege to the city of Poitiers and threatened even Tours, with its holy shrine of St. Martin. The danger was great and it was fortunate for the Franks that they had a man of genius to lead them. With an army composed at least in part of heavy-armed cavalry, Charles met the Moslems near Poitiers and stopped the triumphant advance that had brought them across Africa and into Europe. This battle was not so decisive for world history as used to be stated in popular books. The caliphate was on the eve of a profound revolution that was to break the power of the Ommiad dynasty and turn its empire into a cultural union of autonomous states.<sup>2</sup> The great days of Arab conquest were already past when the Frankish mayor saved the city of Tours. Yet the victory was a notable one in Christian annals. By it Charles gained not only the surname of Martel (the Hammer), but the acclaim of the western world. Furthermore, it coincided with a series of events that induced the papacy to look to the Franks for aid.

The  
battle of  
Tours (or  
Poitiers)

In 717 the Byzantine Empire had found an able and energetic ruler in Leo III, erroneously known in history as the Isaurian.<sup>3</sup> Having earned great prestige through his successful defense of Constantinople against the Moslems, Leo undertook a vigorous reform of the state. Much of his work, particularly in the realms of military and financial administration, was well conceived; thanks to his leadership, his remnant of the ancient Roman Empire again became relatively secure and prosperous. His religious

Leo III  
(717-40)  
and the  
Icono-  
clastic  
Contro-  
versy

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 151.

policy, on the other hand, was not so fortunate. During his early life in southern Asia Minor, Leo had become intimately acquainted with Mohammedanism, as well as with other faiths which rejected much of the contemporary Christian doctrine. Especially widespread at that time was the sect of the Paulicians, who condemned virtually the whole sacramental system, the institution of an ordained clergy, and what they termed the pagan ritual of the church. While sympathizing neither with heretic nor with Moslem, the emperor seems to have been convinced that they were right in at least one respect: the customary use of images and pictures in Christian worship smacked too much of idolatry.

The  
renewed  
schism  
between  
east and  
west

In 725, accordingly, Leo denounced the practice and launched an official campaign of iconoclasm (image-breaking). Though zealously supported by many of the educated, the decree was intensely unpopular with the mass of the people. Riots broke out both in Greece and in Italy. The aged patriarch of Constantinople, because he opposed the change, was supplanted by one more subservient to the imperial will. Of all the great sees—now that Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria were submerged by the Saracens—only Rome was left to voice the opposition to Leo's arbitrary dictation, and of the papal attitude there could be no question. Gregory II (715-31) vigorously protested the emperor's action. His successor, Gregory III, called a council of ninety-three bishops, which formally excommunicated all who accepted the iconoclastic program. Thus east and west were once more at odds over a matter of religion and the pope became all the more strongly confirmed in his determination to maintain political independence.

The  
revival  
of the  
Lombard  
monarchy

At Rome, meanwhile, the Lombard danger had again become acute. That people had long since abandoned the Arian heresy and, through continued residence in the peninsula, had tended to become indistinguishable from the rest of the Italians. And as long as the king's effective rule hardly extended beyond the Po Valley, he could be no serious menace to the security of the pope. Now, however, the Lombard monarchy suddenly developed unexpected strength. In 712 the crown passed, as the result of a successful revolt, to a certain Liutprand. During his reign of thirty years he was able not only to annex a considerable portion of the exarchate, but also to establish real control over the duchies of Spoleto and Benevento. When the pope sought to protect the

dukes, the king replied by threatening Rome itself. The iconoclastic controversy made cooperation with the emperor Leo impossible; so Gregory III, in 739, sent an embassy to Charles Martel. He was beseeched to bring aid to the beleaguered city and in turn to be recognized there as consul—at least a suggestion that the Frankish ruler might take the place of the emperor as sovereign over the papal duchy.

Charles, as it happened, was unwilling to embark on such an adventure. Liutprand had been closely allied with him against both the Saracens and the Bavarians, and he was no longer an adventurous youth. So, at the time, no Frankish army was sent over the Alps, and the Italian question remained to trouble a new generation of political leaders. Charles Martel died in 741, having already—as if he were the sole possessor—divided the Merovingian kingdom between his two sons: Austrasia and the German duchies to Carloman, Neustria and Burgundy to Pepin. Before the end of the same year Zacharias had succeeded Gregory III on the papal throne. Liutprand lived on till 744; then, after two other kings had been deposed, the Lombards proclaimed Aistulf, who at once revived the Byzantine war and defied the pope to hinder his conquests. Meanwhile the death of Emperor Leo III in 740 had brought to power his son, Constantine V—a fanatical iconoclast whose violent measures served only to aggravate the existing schism.

The  
papacy  
and the  
Frankish  
monarchy

The eighth century thus witnessed the emergence of two great powers in the west, both of which—by a remarkable coincidence—lacked the ultimate sanction of legality. The Frankish mayor of the palace actually reigned and yet could wear no crown; the pope governed the duchy of Rome but remained the subject of an emperor in Constantinople with whom he had forbidden all good Christians to have any dealings. Was not the alliance of these two powers inevitable? All the great events of the previous hundred years—the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, the triumphant advance of the Saracens, the victory of the papal missions in Germany, the revival of the Lombard monarchy—contributed to the one momentous result. The dramatic climax of this development came on Christmas, 800; the logical preliminaries were provided by the career of Pepin III.

For six years the two sons of Charles Martel ruled the Frankish lands together, cooperating to such good effect that they easily crushed all separatist tendencies in troublesome regions like

King  
Pepin I  
(751-68)

Aquitaine and Bavaria. Then, in 747, the elder brother decided to become a monk, and Pepin was left to rule alone. Four years later certain Frankish prelates appeared before Pope Zacharias and asked his advice as to the value of the Merovingian kingship. The pope replied that, in his opinion, the man who had the actual power better deserved the royal title than one who had not. So, in the autumn of 751, a great assembly of the Franks was held at Soissons, and there Mayor Pepin III became King Pepin I, through election by his people and through solemn consecration by the prelates of the church. The last of the Merovingian kings, with shorn locks, was sent to spend the rest of his days in a monastery, and the house of Clovis ended in oblivion.

Pepin's  
intervention in  
Italy  
(754, 756)

Aistulf, the Lombard king, had in the meantime launched his offensive against the exarchate; and it was final, for Ravenna fell in 751. He then occupied Pentapolis, established his personal authority at Spoleto, and laid siege to Rome. Nor would he agree to an armistice until tribute was paid him as sovereign over that duchy. Stephen II, the recently elected pope, thereupon announced that he would come to Gaul for an interview with the king. In the summer of 754 he did so. Following the ritual of the Old Testament, he anointed Pepin with consecrated oil and declared excommunicate all Franks who should dare to refuse him recognition as lawful monarch. At the same time he proclaimed Pepin as *patricius* of the Romans—a title that vaguely served to recall the distinguished series of imperial representatives in Italy that had ended with Theodoric the Ostrogoth. But if the office was more than an empty honor, what right had the pope to bestow it? Although the language displayed a certain respect for tradition, the act was as revolutionary as Pepin's assumption of the crown.

The important fact was that the Frankish king had already pledged intervention in Italy. Within a few months he led an army across the Alps and defeated the Lombards in battle. Aistulf signed a treaty ceding the exarchate and Pentapolis to the pope and promising tribute to Pepin as overlord. But the engagements were not carried out, and, after repeated exhortations from Stephen, Pepin again invaded Italy in 756. This time he seized the disputed lands and by formal charter gave them in perpetual ownership to the church of St. Peter. Thus came into existence the Papal States of history—an irregular territory extending across the peninsula from Rome on the west to Ravenna

on the east. Aistulf barely outlived his defeat, being accidentally slain before the end of the same year. His successor was Desiderius, duke of Tuscany, who also was to prove a troublesome neighbor for the papacy.

For the remainder of his life, however, Pepin was allowed to concentrate his attention on domestic affairs. Before intervening in Italy, the new king had succeeded in conquering all Septimania except Narbonne. In 759 this city too came into his possession, and for the first time the Frankish dominion reached the line of the Pyrenees. Aquitaine still remained a source of chronic trouble, and it was not until after a prolonged war that the rebellious duke was killed in battle and his duchy subjected to royal administration. On the eastern frontier the kingdom remained much as it had been left by Charles Martel. There the work of that valiant warrior was to be taken up by his grandson and namesake.

The conquest of Septimania

## 2. CHARLEMAGNE

Following long-established precedent, Pepin divided his dominions between his two sons: Charles to have Austrasia, Neustria, and the northern half of Aquitaine; Carloman to have Alamania, Burgundy, Provence, Septimania, and the rest of Aquitaine. From the first they lived on bad terms with each other, and in all probability civil war was prevented only by the sudden death of the younger brother in 771. Charles then acted promptly, seizing the entire inheritance, while Carloman's widow and children took refuge with the Lombard, Desiderius. Meanwhile Charles had married a daughter of that king, but he now repudiated the lady and prepared for the invasion of Italy. In this policy he was strongly supported by the newly elected pope, Hadrian I, who complained that Desiderius was seeking to undo Pepin's settlement.

Charles and Carloman (768-771)

In 773 the matter finally reached a crisis. Charles led an army southward, outflanked the position of Desiderius in the Alps, and shut him up in Pavia. Then, leaving his troops to continue the siege, the Frank paid a ceremonious visit to the pope at Rome. Pepin's donation, somewhat amplified, was confirmed and the two princes swore a solemn alliance. Inside a few months Pavia had surrendered, and with the capture of Desiderius, Charles assumed the kingship of the Lombards for himself. So began a new epoch in the history of Italy, which throughout many centuries was to

The conquest of the Lombard kingdom (773-74)

be intimately associated with the Frankish monarchy. Charles's control, of course, was primarily restricted to those regions which had been held by Desiderius, but from the outset he acted as much more than a theoretical overlord within the Papal States. His authority was recognized over all the northern peninsula; occasionally he even intervened in the duchies of Spoleto and Benevento. Perhaps he might eventually have brought all southern Italy under his dominion, if in the meantime his attention had not become absorbed in more grandiose ambitions.

Charles  
and the  
Saxons

It would seem that Charles was primarily interested not in fighting Greeks or Saracens for the control of the Mediterranean, but in completing the Frankish conquest of Germany. This Merovingian project, after languishing for a hundred years or so, had recently been revived by Charles Martel. He and Pepin, by actively backing the missionary efforts of the Roman church, had greatly strengthened the royal authority beyond the Rhine. Alamania, Thuringia, and even Bavaria were now much more effectively held than ever before. The stubborn Frisians had gradually yielded to the combined force of Christian persuasion and Frankish arms. There remained the fierce Saxons, who up to date had never paid more than intermittent tribute to their powerful neighbors. The logic of the situation inevitably urged the vigorous young king, for the glory of God and for the extension of his own realm, to undertake the reduction of this wild people.

In the eighth century the Saxons still lived very much as the Vandals or Goths or Franks had lived at an earlier time. They constituted no unified nation and had no firm political organization. They were divided into three secondary groups, called the Westphalians, Eastphalians, and Engers; but these in turn were mere aggregations of other tribal units which normally joined only for some extraordinary purpose, such as a great war of self-defense. Virtually to a man, they were yet heathen, devoted to ancient deities which had earlier been worshiped by the Anglo-Saxons. The region which they occupied included roughly the valleys of the Lippe, the Ems, and the Weser, extending east to the line of the Elbe and Saale, and north to the country of the Danes in Jutland. As yet Saxony was a savage region of forest, plain, and marsh, with scattering agricultural settlements and an occasional fortified refuge, or *burg*.

Even before his descent into Italy, Charles had led a prelimi-

nary expedition into the Saxon territory, advancing to the Weser and forcing the recognition of his supremacy by the Engers. Then, having disposed of the Lombards, he returned to the unfinished task. In 775 a greater campaign extended the Frankish dominion over all the Saxons, and new fortresses were built to keep the conquered territory in subjection. A Frankish assembly held there in 777 promulgated measures looking toward the Christianization of the inhabitants and the organization of a more permanent government. The Saxons, however, would not tamely submit to their new masters, and whenever Charles's back was turned they reverted to their customary insubordination. After 780, accordingly, the king tightened his system of administration and issued the cruel Capitulary for the Saxon Territory, prescribing the death penalty for all who refused baptism or continued heathen practices.

The conquest of Saxony (772-85)

The result was a general insurrection of the Saxons under the leadership of the Westphalian Widukind—a movement in which many of the Frisians immediately joined. Accepting the defiance, Charles, during the years 784-85, crushed the rising in blood. Eventually the whole country was subdued; Widukind yielded and received baptism. And although there continued to be sporadic outbreaks, followed by violent reprisals, Saxony thenceforth constituted an integral part of the Frankish kingdom. In 789 the first Saxon bishopric was established at Bremen. Others were rapidly created while great Benedictine monasteries were erected on all sides. Within another century Saxon scholars and missionaries were glorifying the work which their ancestors had so bitterly opposed.

Almost immediately after gaining a decisive victory in Saxony, Charles turned his attention to Bavaria. That territory had in some fashion or other belonged to the Frankish kings for over two centuries, but the subjection had been little more than nominal. Even more recently, with the revival of the monarchical authority under the Carolingians, the Bavarian ruler had generally conducted himself like an independent prince. Tassilo, the present duke, had earlier deserted Pepin in the midst of his war in Aquitaine and had then entered into close alliance with the Lombard, Desiderius. Charles, having himself had many causes of complaint, seems deliberately to have resolved upon Tassilo's ruin. In 787 an overwhelming force occupied Bavaria and compelled the duke to acknowledge the king's supremacy. Nor was

The conquest of Bavaria (787-88)



this all. In the very next year Tassilo was suddenly accused of treason, deprived of his duchy, and immured for the rest of his life in a monastery.

The de-  
struction  
of the  
Avar  
power  
(795-96)

Though unaccompanied with bloodshed, this action amounted to the armed conquest of another great province, and it completed the establishment of Charles's dominion on a wide front extending from the western end of the Baltic to the head of the Adriatic. The next step, obviously, was to organize this frontier by breaking any hostile force that might threaten it from the east and by erecting along it a system of permanent defense. During the last decade of the eighth century that work was made possible chiefly through the final defeat of the Avars—the Asiatics who had come to dominate the lower Danube Valley, the interior of the Balkan peninsula, and a belt of Slavic lands to the northward.<sup>4</sup> For a time they had threatened Italy and southern Germany, but on that side they had finally been held in check by the Lombards and the Bavarians.

Now that Charles had taken over the territories of both these peoples, it was logical that he should accept their responsibilities with regard to the nomads of the steppe. As a matter of fact, the Avars, though still maintaining their power in Pannonia and Dacia, had long ceased to be very formidable. Toward the Black Sea the Bulgars, and toward the Adriatic the Serbs, Croats, and other Slavs had made themselves independent. Carinthia had been taken by the Bavarian dukes, and it was from there that Charles rapidly pushed his control southeast to the Dalmatian coast. Driving the Avars beyond the Danube, the Frankish army finally broke their huge round camps, which were called the Rings. Thence the victors carried home enormous treasure—the accumulated loot of a thousand raids—and Charles could justly assert that he had won another momentous victory for the Cross of Christ.

The  
eastern  
marches

As the eastern boundary was finally drawn, the Frankish kingdom contained Istria, Carinthia, Bavaria, Thuringia, and Saxony; beyond them lay a series of frontier districts called marks or marches, each under a special count with extensive military authority who was known as a marquis or margrave (*markgraf*). These borderlands included, south of the Danube, Croatia and Pannonia; north of the Danube, Moravia and Bohemia, the coun-

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 114.

try of the Czechs; and east of the Saale and Elbe, the territory of the Sorbs, Wilzi, and other Slavic peoples. Against the Danes, similarly, a march was created in the region that was later to become known as Holstein. As the Franks were held on other fronts, they, with their new recruits from Germany, now tended to surge eastward, conquering, converting, and exploiting the savage tribes of the interior.

While devoting many years to the reduction and defense of Germany, Charles had not forgotten his western possessions. Having inherited from Pepin effective control of Aquitaine and Septimania, he was in a position to intervene in Spain. Until 732 the Moslem advance into Europe had triumphantly continued; then, after the victory of Charles Martel, the Moors had little by little been driven back on the Pyrenees. This reversal of their fortunes in the west was symptomatic of their declining strength in the east. The Ommiad dynasty fell in 750, and with the removal of the caliphate to Bagdad, the hold of the central government over its outlying provinces rapidly weakened. Abd-ar-Rahman, last survivor of the Ommiads, escaped from Damascus and made his way to Cordova. There, from 756 on, he ruled as emir, successfully defying the authority of the Abbasid caliph. As a consequence, appeals against the emir were carried to Charles from various interested persons. Even the gorgeous caliph Harun al-Rashid,<sup>5</sup> in far-away Bagdad, sent him wonderful gifts and flattering letters urging his cooperation against the usurping Ommiad.

The  
creation  
of the  
Spanish  
March

Charles, early in his reign, seems to have been persuaded that he might actually conquer Spain with little effort. But an expedition in 778 utterly failed, and on the return journey his army was ambushed by the Christian Basques in the pass of Roncevaux and some of his noblest followers were slain—an incident from which pious legend developed a glorious epic for the feudal age.<sup>6</sup> To Charles himself it probably served merely as a warning not to indulge in fantastic projects beyond the Pyrenees. Adopting a defensive policy, he thenceforth sought merely to check the Saracen raids that still occasionally troubled Gaul. By 795 sufficient territory had been occupied for the organization of a frontier district, and six years later a further advance of the Franks gave them the city of Barcelona. Thus arose the Spanish March,

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> See below, pp. 292 f.

which was to remain an outpost of northern influence for many centuries to come.

Kingship  
and  
patriciate

In the meantime, however, another matter of surpassing interest had turned men's attention from such paltry events as the capture of a Spanish fortress or two. This was nothing less than the revival of the imperial office in the west, and in order to grasp its significance we must carefully examine the preliminaries that led up to it. In 754 Pepin, newly elected king of the Franks, received from the pope the title, *patricius* of the Romans, and shortly afterwards he took the exarchate from the Lombards and gave it to the Roman church. Charles, continuing to bear his father's titles, confirmed Pepin's donation and then, after the fall of Desiderius, assumed the Lombard kingship. In 781 he had Pope Hadrian crown his second son, Pepin, king of Italy, and his third son, Louis, king of Aquitaine. But these acts were mere formalities. The kingdom of Aquitaine was created largely to please the native population, and its establishment made no change in the actual administration. The kingdom of Italy was only Lombardy with a few minor additions, including neither the exarchate nor the duchy of Rome. In those regions Charles himself continued to act as sovereign, and his authority there must have been exercised not as king, but as *patricius* of the Romans.

The  
imperial  
coronation  
of 800

Hadrian I, though he fully cooperated with Charles on all occasions, was a distinctly proud and forceful prince. In 795, however, his place was taken by Leo III, who soon proved himself more submissive to the great Frankish ruler. He at once notified Charles of his election to the papacy, and from the outset he dated his acts in the year of that monarch's reign. Perhaps he anticipated the need of outside support. At any rate, the opposition of certain local nobles led in 799 to a riot in which the pope was cruelly handled. Escaping through the timely aid of certain Frankish ministers, Leo fled to Charles, who at once provided the forces necessary to re-establish him in his capital. But the arrest of the conspirators brought a flock of evil charges against the pope, and Charles decided that the matter demanded his personal attention. In November, 800, he proceeded to Italy. A great assembly of clergy and laity was held at Rome early in December, and it was there decided to allow the pope to clear himself by his unaided oath.<sup>7</sup> This he at length did on December 23,

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 78.

swearing on the Gospels that he was wholly innocent of what had been alleged against him.

Two days later, being now formally reinstated as supreme pontiff, Leo presided over the Christmas festival in St. Peter's church. After mass had been said, and while Charles was praying at the altar, the pope placed a diadem on his head and the assembled throng shouted, "To Charles Augustus, crowned of God, great and pacific emperor of the Romans, life and victory!" Are we to believe, as we are told by the official annalists, that this ceremony took Charles entirely by surprise and that he was actually displeased at the high honor so unexpectedly thrust upon him? The statement seems incredible. The stage was too carefully set for the affair to have been other than premeditated. Charles was not a man on whom to try experimental coronations. Nor was Leo the sort of prelate who would dare to concoct such a plan on his own initiative. The assumption of the imperial title was the dramatic climax of Charles's whole career. He must have willed it.

As far as justification was concerned, the facts spoke for themselves. His territory was much larger than that held by any Byzantine emperor since Heraclius; his personal authority was infinitely greater than that of any western ruler since Theodosius. The tradition of an indestructible Roman Empire still charmed the minds of men, including unquestionably that of Charles himself. The west had had no resident emperor since 476; now one was again installed. In strict theory, of course, Leo had no more right to bestow the crown than Charles had to assume it; but a pope had earlier given a Frankish king the title of *patricius* and it was now superseded by the title of emperor. The revolution had been so gradually brought about that to contemporaries it seemed logical enough. Besides, legalization might be procured from Constantinople. To this end Charles devoted earnest efforts, and just before his death he was assured that, in return for the cession of Dalmatia and Venetia, his newly acquired rank would be recognized by the Byzantine emperor.

The nature  
of the  
Carolingian  
Empire

So emerged the institution which, in its later form of the Holy Roman Empire, was to live to a preposterous old age—until, in fact, the myth of its existence was exploded by Napoleon's guns at Austerlitz. In 800 it was somewhat more of an actuality; yet, when examined closely, it is seen to have been fatally weak from its very inception. Its only real strength was the might of the

one man whom later generations were to call Charles the Great, or Charlemagne. It was truly his empire, the Carolingian Empire. Though glorified by the blessing of the church, it was inspired by nothing but his personal ambition and was Roman merely by virtue of a tradition. It might just as well have been called the kingdom of the Franks, for Italy was no more of a separate state than was Bavaria or Burgundy or Aquitaine or many another region within its bounds. The fact that it included all the Germanic kingdoms of the continent has given it, to modern eyes, a specious appearance of unity. Would it have been much less coherent if it had embraced Sicily, Spain, Ireland, Poland, and Macedonia? As it was, it lacked all national solidarity, and the common bond of religion never had any political strength. Could such a hasty agglomeration of disparate lands and peoples, though styled an empire, succeed under conditions which had produced the disintegration of Rome? We should hardly suppose so. Before attempting a more positive statement, let us look more attentively at the internal structure of the monarchy.

### 3. CAROLINGIAN SOCIETY AND INSTITUTIONS

The king At the head of the Carolingian state stood the king, whose office was essentially the same as it had been under the Merovingians, for the title of emperor added little to his real authority. Like other barbarian monarchs, he had three principal functions: to command the army, to administer justice, and to protect the church. He was not supposed to be absolute. Extraordinary measures were adopted on the counsel of his great men; matters of supreme importance were promulgated at great assemblies called Fields of May, though they were not always held in that month. To deduce principles of democracy or of constitutional government from the informal practices of the Carolingians is to read modern notions into an age that knew them not. It is quite impossible to define the respective rights of king and people in terms of strict legalism. A powerful ruler like Charlemagne might often act despotically, and we may be sure that his acts were mainly inspired by his own interest. Yet he would always have admitted that the law was fundamentally ancient custom, over which he had no arbitrary control. And he knew that, if he violated it too flagrantly, he would incur the penalty of armed rebellion.

Between the administration of Charlemagne's household and

that of his empire no clear distinction was drawn. One set of high officials superintended both. Prominent among them were the chamberlain, who acted as governor of the palace and of the royal treasure; the seneschal, who managed the king's food and in some degree supervised the estates that produced it; the butler, who had charge of the royal cellar and vineyards; and the marshal or constable, who, through his control of the stable, had high command in the army. Below these great officials were a host of subordinates with shifting powers, whom it would be tiresome to enumerate. A few words, however, may be said of the king's religious service, because it came to have certain very significant developments. The chapel (*capella*) was originally the repository of that sacred relic, the cloak (*cappa*) of St. Martin, and the chaplain was the custodian. Later, however, all the clergy attached to the palace were said to belong to the royal chapel, and their chief, the arch-chaplain, became a very important person at court. Under him were not merely the priests who administered the sacraments to the king and his family, but also the clerks who wrote his letters and the notaries who drew up his legal documents. The chancellor, as head of this particular department, emerged after the time of Charlemagne.

The  
officers of  
the court

As in the earlier period, the agents of the central government in the provinces were the dukes and the counts. Under the Merovingians there had been many powerful dukes who conducted themselves in all ways like local kings. With the Carolingian succession, their offices were generally abolished and dukes of the old princely type remained only where the royal authority was more or less nominal, as among the Lombards of southern Italy, the Basques on the Pyrenees, and the Bretons in their isolated peninsula. Elsewhere within the empire the title of duke was merely a synonym for that of marquis—a frontier count who held certain extraordinary powers. It was, in fact, through his counts that Charlemagne governed his dominions; the key to his success lay in his control of those all-powerful lieutenants.

Dukes and  
counts

Without regard to the boundaries of sub-kingdoms like Italy and Aquitaine, Charlemagne appointed counts at his own pleasure, holding them constantly subject to his orders and removing them whenever he became convinced of their treachery or incompetence. The trouble was, of course, to keep efficient check on the acts of unscrupulous agents widely separated from the court and paid through grants of land in the regions which they administered.

The difficulty was principally met by the prodigious activity of the emperor himself, who was continually moving about at the head of his troops. To the same end, however, Charlemagne systematically employed *missi*—men “sent out” from headquarters to inspect the operation of the local government. This was a practice which had formed a regular part of the Roman administration,<sup>8</sup> but which had generally lapsed under the Merovingians.

The *missi* By his elaborate decree of 802, the emperor announces that he has chosen from among his wisest nobles, both clergymen and laymen, those who shall go about the whole kingdom to see that the various enumerated classes of persons are living as they should. Whenever the *missi* hear of any injustice in the law as then administered, they are to report back to him so that he may remedy it. They are to listen to all complaints and investigate the facts by securing the sworn testimony of witnesses; and if they and the local authorities are unable to render justice, they are to refer the matter to the king. They are to see that all men take an oath of fealty to Charles as emperor; that no one neglects a summons to his army, disobeys his ban, or wrongfully makes away with his property; that families do not prosecute blood feuds after just compensation for injuries has been offered; that causes are not maintained in court by oppression or bribery; and that a dozen other matters are seen to. The *missi* are to superintend not only the acts of officials and ordinary laymen, but also those of priests and monks, who should live according to the holy canons. Every one must strive, to the extent of his ability, to govern his conduct by the precepts of the Almighty.

The capit- ularies There is, unfortunately, every reason to believe that the results attained by Charlemagne’s envoys fell far short of his pious ideals; the age was not noted for universal observance of the golden rule. Nevertheless, there can be no question of the emperor’s sincerity, and, thanks to his earnest efforts, his government set a relatively high standard of honesty and efficiency. In spirit, at least, it was infinitely superior to that of the Merovingians—a truth that emerges with especial force from the great ordinances called capitularies. They were not invented by Charlemagne, but under him they were issued in unprecedented numbers to deal with every phase of the royal administration. Occasionally one capitulary was restricted to one subject—as, for

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 30.

example, the improvement of education, the care of the imperial estates, affairs of Italy, or the organization of the Saxon territory. Usually, however, the capitulary was a haphazard mass of decisions that chanced to be rendered at the same time. And the fact that they were so utterly unsystematic—that they indiscriminately treated of church and state, law and discipline, public and private rights—is quite typical of the government that produced them.

Though Charlemagne considered himself responsible for the administration of justice throughout the empire, he of course introduced no uniformity of practice. Law continued, as before, to be a matter of local custom. Each little region still had its own popular court which enforced rules drawn from Roman, Frankish, Gothic, Burgundian, Lombard, Bavarian, or other traditional usage. The presiding officer was still the count or his subordinate. One reform, however, was introduced in the Carolingian period: in place of the *rachimburgi*, who had occasionally served as judgment-finders in the Merovingian courts,<sup>9</sup> Charlemagne had the counts appoint regular boards of judges. These men, called *scabini*, were important local landowners, who came to act for the whole assembly except at the general sessions—usually three a year—when all suitors had to attend. On a somewhat wider scale, the same procedure was probably followed in the extraordinary courts held by the *missi*, and even in the central court of the king. The nucleus of the latter would be the royal ministers and advisers, but at any moment it might be indefinitely extended by calling in “the people.”

Judicial  
organiza-  
tion

Between such a great meeting and a military convocation no distinction was necessarily made. Scarcely a year passed without the launching of some major campaign; so the Field of May often coincided with the mobilization of an army. In theory the ancient principle still held good that all able-bodied men were liable for service, but far-reaching modifications of the primitive system were rapidly introduced. Specific rules were established prescribing the weapons and defensive armor to be possessed by each person in proportion to his means. And since the obligation of serving at one's own cost for a period of three months was a heavy one, the emperor restricted it to men owning certain amounts of land—amounts which varied from region to region

Military  
service

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 157.



according to the distance from the scene of war. For this purpose, therefore, estates came to be assessed in a rude unit known as the manse or hide—the land presumed requisite for the support of one family. Great landlords were made responsible for one soldier from every so many hides. Small men were grouped together so that by joint contributions one of them might go.

Cavalry  
forces

For the procuring of mounted troops, similar arrangements were even more essential. The emperor might, of course, require certain properties to furnish horses instead of men; but to obtain a force of expert cavalry, something better was demanded than casual levies made through the count. This truth had long been appreciated. Charles Martel, needing horsemen with which to combat the Saracens and lacking funds to hire them, solved the difficulty, we are told, at the expense of the church. He took ecclesiastical lands and granted them to his own retainers as life estates, or benefices, in return specifying military service with horses and arms. Presumably, however, the king had already created such benefices out of his own property; at any rate, it became increasingly common, toward the end of the century, for all great men to do so. Charlemagne, to strengthen his army, encouraged the practice, providing that in time of war armed retainers might follow the standard of the lord whom they served. So, alongside the levies of the counts, two additional elements tended to acquire enhanced prominence: the bands of the king's own personal followers and the similar bands furnished by the *grande*s of the realm. This, as will be seen in connection with feudalism, was a development of great significance for the future of Europe.

Taxation  
and  
finance

In financial organization, likewise, the monarchy remained fundamentally as it had been in the previous age. The two great political concerns of the royal administration, justice and military defense, were taken care of through service on the part of the individual subject. In the same way the maintenance of public works, the housing and provisioning of royal agents, and the transportation of men and materials were secured by direct requisition. An endless plague of such exactions had, in fact, continued to afflict the countryside since the days of the Roman Empire. Nor was there any interruption in the levy of indirect taxes, now called *thelonea*, tolls. On the other hand, the ancient system of taxes on land and persons had so far decayed that only indistinct vestiges of them henceforth appear in the records. And

Charlemagne invented no new imposts to take their places. Tribute might be collected from newly subjected peoples, but the nearest approach to a general tax throughout the empire was the practice of taking contributions, styled gifts (*dona*), from the great men when they attended the formal assemblies. That they in turn recouped themselves by requiring similar offerings from their followers is extremely probable. Finance, like military service, was tending to become a matter of seignorial arrangement, that is to say, a matter brought under the control of the lordly class in society.

The bulk of Charlemagne's income, plainly, was got from his own estates, for he was the greatest landowner in the kingdom. This side of the emperor's activity is known to us in intimate detail from his famous capitulary concerning his villas (*Capitulare de Villis*) which contains minute instructions as to how they should be managed. Each villa was placed under a steward called *maior* or *villicus*, responsible to a superior official who acted as superintendent for a considerable number of such properties. The steward saw to the cultivation of the estate and had the produce carried to central barns, where the superintendent kept it for the disposal of the emperor. Each steward, according to the capitulary, was to make out an annual statement, describing the sources of income under his care and listing everything that was produced: grain, hay, fruits, nuts, vegetables, wine, beer, vinegar, oil, flax, hemp, honey, wool, hides, horns, tallow, meat, lumber, firewood, domestic animals and fowls, eggs, dairy products, game, fish, and all manufactures. He was to keep account of all the tenants and their respective obligations; to see that there were skilled artisans for the production of all necessary articles; to make an inventory of all buildings, tools, and furnishings; and to attend to a dozen other matters as well. And from extant reports made by his agents, we may see that the emperor's regulations in this connection were actually enforced.

The  
imperial  
estates

Charlemagne, regarding himself as the anointed of God and the successor of Theodosius, constantly asserted a general power of supervision over the church. His capitularies regularly included measures affecting both clergy and laity. Even when problems arose of a purely ecclesiastical nature, it was through his initiative and under his presidency that action was taken by the bishops in council. They, in fact, were normally quite submissive to his desires, for episcopal elections were under his con-

Charle-  
magne  
and the  
church

trol. State and church he evidently considered two departments of one government: for some duties he employed counts, for others bishops. The pope he seems to have regarded somewhat as the Byzantine emperor regarded the patriarch of Constantinople. He very plainly held that Rome was under his supreme jurisdiction and that he merely allowed its bishop such autonomy as befitted a distinguished prelate. In all matters, however, he acted entirely on his own responsibility, feeling that he was himself the holder of a divine commission. The pope, on his side, seemed to acquiesce in the imperial leadership. Charlemagne's services to the cause of Christianity were evident to all, and Leo III had good reason for personal gratitude as well. Besides, there was no threat of an immediate dictatorship over the see of St. Peter. The emperor chose to live far from Italy; he was exactly what the pope wanted—a powerful but distant protector.

The  
Carolingian  
monastery

Abbots, too, Charlemagne virtually appointed; through them he sought to maintain a high level of religious discipline and so to advance the civilization of his country. All the great monasteries had now been brought under the Benedictine system. Except by special authorization, the monks stayed within their respective houses, where the ancient routine of divine service and manual labor was supposed to be kept up indefinitely. Much, however, depended on the character of the abbot and the relative wealth of the community. Although the brothers were individually sworn to poverty, collectively they might have anything that they could possibly want. When all the necessities of life were supplied by peasants on outlying estates, there was no necessity for the monks themselves to do any hard work. Their manual labor would consist mainly in caring for one another and for the monastic buildings. The latter normally included a church for the daily offices; a chapter house for meetings of the brothers; a refectory where they ate; and a dormitory where they slept. In addition, there would have to be a kitchen and various storehouses. The principal buildings were often arranged about an open quadrangle with an arcaded cloister, which was a center of monastic activities except in the severest weather. The individual monk, it must be remembered, had no room of his own.

Grants of  
immunity

Very commonly, in the time of Charlemagne, both abbots and bishops held extensive temporal authority. This was the consequence of a gradual development which had begun long before

with the Merovingian charters of immunity. Such a grant assured the beneficiary that within a specified territory he should be immune from the jurisdiction of the count; that he should there exercise the regalian rights himself. Originally, perhaps, he was obliged to make an equivalent return to the king; but by the ninth century the effect of an immunity was to give the immunist the profits of justice, tolls, military service, and other dues that normally would have accrued to the state. As every important monastery and bishopric obtained the privilege, their heads became actual princes, sharing the king's sovereign authority and equaling the counts in official dignity. Thus was developed another important element in the society known as feudal—a subject which at once introduces us to some of the most difficult problems in European history.

Definitive solutions, fortunately, do not have to be attempted in an elementary sketch such as this. An outline of social conditions existing in the Carolingian period is not hard to draw, and the obscure stages by which those conditions had been evolved may be summarily passed over. For reasons already set forth, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that western Europe witnessed a progressive economic decline from the third century onward. Though not primarily the result of the barbarian invasions, it was undoubtedly stimulated by them. In both Gaul and Italy conditions were much worse in the sixth and seventh centuries than they had been in the fifth. And by the eighth, Arab sea power had broken almost all the ancient routes across the Mediterranean. With Africa, Spain, and Septimania in the hands of the Moslems, and with Italy torn by chronic warfare, the lands to the northwest of the Alps were further isolated. It is very significant that Charlemagne's revival of learning was inspired by the example of Irish and Anglo-Saxon monasteries.<sup>10</sup> Charlemagne's state was entirely a construction of the mainland, which left Dalmatia, Venetia, and southern Italy to Byzantine control and had little success against the Moors of Spain. The Carolingian Empire was a brilliant but superficial accomplishment; it in no way provided the foundation for a new political order. Economically, the period was one of continuous deterioration. Europe was not to emerge from the Dark Age for another three hundred years.

The  
economic  
back-  
ground

<sup>10</sup> See below, pp. 221 f.

The decay  
of trade in  
the west

Whatever may have been its causes, this economic decline carried with it a progressive decay of commerce, and so tended to make society more and more thoroughly agrarian. By the ninth century, the overwhelming mass of the population lived through agriculture and fell into two main classes: the few, who constituted the aristocracy of landlords, and the many, who constituted the servile or semi-free peasantry. Such a society had no conspicuous place for a town-dwelling middle class of traders. Small industry, of course, continued, for people had to have manufactured articles; but production was localized on the great estate. As described in Charlemagne's capitularies, artisans were attached to the villa and subordinated to its agrarian routine. Trade tended to be reduced to petty dealings in a neighborhood market which was attended only by persons who could conveniently go there and return home within the one day when it was held. The market itself necessitated no resident population of merchants; the sellers were normally peasants with surplus produce. It is significant also that the only money coined under the Carolingians was silver pennies; and since the minting privilege was widely distributed, each little region came to have its own currency—a situation that bespeaks small transactions on the part of folk who were chronically poor.

In the east no such thoroughgoing decline took place. There commerce continued to flourish, and there the cities of the Arabs continued to rival those of the Greeks. Moslem Africa and Spain remained in close touch with Egypt and Syria, preserving a brilliant culture of which more will be seen in the following chapter. The Italian ports, too, never lost touch with the great metropolis of Constantinople; and while the Franks fought for control of the interior, the city of Venice, under Byzantine protection, arose on the lagoons of the upper Adriatic. From these regions bands of wandering merchants, usually Syrians and Jews, still penetrated into the remote provinces of the west, but all the evidence tends to prove that they were relatively few in number. And on their infrequent visits they brought principally articles of luxury—perfumes, drugs, spices, precious stones, armor, silks, and the like—which could be afforded only by the very wealthy. Commerce of this kind could give permanent employment to few persons in Gaul or Britain.

Throughout the old Roman territories, it is true, we constantly hear of places called cities (*civitates*), which still bore their an-

cient Latin names. Physically they continued to exist. Yet, before any real continuity of urban life is presupposed, certain facts must be taken into account. Many of the *civitates* in Gaul and other regions had never been much more than centers of administration and defense; and after the fifth century official usage made no distinction between the *civitas* and the *castrum*, which originally had been a fortified camp.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, archæology proves that what had been relatively great cities, like Cologne and London, lost all but a few of their inhabitants long before the time of Charlemagne. Land within the old walls sometimes reverted to gardens, or vineyards, or pasture. And though bishops and counts commonly used cities for their capitals, the persons whom they attracted were principally soldiers, clerks, and serving men, supported, like their masters, by the labor of peasants on adjoining estates. The inevitable conclusion must be that, in spite of possible exceptions, the cities of the Carolingian Empire were chiefly military positions and official residences. They had little or no mercantile life and they included few, if any, professional traders or artisans. Economically, they were not centers of production. Socially, they had no peculiarity to mark them off from the countryside. Politically, they lacked every vestige of true municipal organization. When, subsequently, we again find flourishing towns in the west, they appear as new developments, bearing no real connection with the cities of antiquity.

The  
"cities"  
of the  
Dark Age

Today scholars are by no means so confident as they once were that liberty was universal among the primitive Germans; some have gone so far as to affirm the opposite. In any case, the noble German had no prejudice against the enslavement of the other fellow. When the barbarians came into the empire, they were quite willing to adopt any institution that added to their wealth or authority. There can, for example, be no doubt concerning the persistence of the Roman villa under the new masters of the countryside; the model for the mediæval manor was unquestionably the great estate of the later empire. There we encounter the division of the arable between the proprietor and the tenants so that each of the latter had his own plot in return for rents and

The  
origin  
of the  
manorial  
system

<sup>11</sup> See above, pp. 8, 35. The confusion of the Latin words is reflected in the vernacular languages. The Germanic *burg* (*burh*, *bury*, *borgo*, etc.) appears in the names of many Roman cities and other fortified places. The Latin *castrum* became the Anglo-Saxon *ceaster* or *chester* and was applied in Britain either to old cities or to legionary camps. In Welsh the same word was turned into *caer*—as in *Caerleon* (*Castrum Legionum*), Carmarthen, Carlisle, and the like.

labor owed to the former. Among the cultivators there were slaves (*servi*) as well as the theoretical freemen called *coloni*. Eventually, however, all came to be settled in much the same way; through imperial legislation the *coloni* were as firmly attached to the estate as if they had been slaves. By the fifth century, the mass of the agricultural population in the west had already become an economically dependent peasantry. And as the government deputed its authority to the great landlords, this dependence came to have also a political character.

Then came the barbarians, who for the most part seem merely to have taken over a share of the existing estates, leaving them to be cultivated as before. Although the invaders were for a while differentiated from Romans, all such distinction had utterly vanished by the time of Charlemagne. There remained only one agrarian aristocracy, usually speaking a Latin dialect throughout Gaul, but in dress, custom, and mentality predominantly barbarian. Beneath this aristocracy Roman dependents, poorer German settlers, captives in war, and other subjected persons had been fused into the villein class of the Middle Ages. To what extent free Germanic villages may have been established on imperial soil or may have survived in territories beyond the frontier is a dubious matter. Such villages, in so far as they existed, must have rapidly disappeared, for in Carolingian times the system of seignorial exploitation was well-nigh universal. Many, perhaps most, of the peasants were legally free; yet economically they were unfree, being reduced to the position of *coloni*. Even the *servus* became what we know as a serf; and to designate the rightless bondman, a new word was introduced—slave or *esclave*, derived from the unfortunate Slavs whom the nomads sold in droves to the peoples of the west.<sup>12</sup>

The  
benefice

Along with the development of manorialism—the economic subjection of the masses to great landlords—the records of the Merovingian period reveal a striking tendency toward dependent tenure on the part of men who were entirely free. In the troublous centuries of the Dark Age the lot of the small proprietor became increasingly hard. Often, to secure necessary protection or relief from oppressive exactions, he would give his land to a church and receive it back as a benefice (*beneficium*), an estate held of the church in return for some service, whether substantial

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 50, below, ch. xi.

or nominal. In the same way a bishop, abbot, or other lord might of his own initiative grant benefices to worthy adventurers who would agree to fight in his defense. And the same result would be obtained when a destitute man requested land from which to gain a livelihood. In the latter case the benefice might also be called a *precaria* because it had been granted in answer to prayer (*preces*). The name is a matter of secondary interest. The important point to remember is that the benefice was not the holding of a peasant within an estate; rather it was an estate itself—that is to say, land under cultivation, together with the cultivators.

The precedents for all such developments in land tenure were undoubtedly Roman, but alongside them we find another widely prevalent institution which seems to have been essentially barbarian in origin. This was the honorable relationship of lord and vassal.<sup>13</sup> For protection the primitive German had looked primarily to his family or clan, which was solemnly bound to avenge any wrong done to one of its members. Though vestiges of the ancient tribal system lasted for many centuries in the Germanic states of western Europe, the actual power of the kindred groups rapidly waned before the advance of the royal authority. Yet the times remained lawless; murder and robbery thrived in spite of royal decrees and judicial prosecutions. Experience proved that a great man was an exceedingly useful ally. So the weaker commended themselves to the powerful, and the latter proportionately gained in prestige. Even the king encouraged the practice, for he could then hold the superior person responsible for the deeds of his followers, and the number of elusive vagabonds would be reduced. These factors stimulated the extension of the custom which Tacitus had described as the *comitatus*. It remained a personal relationship—from one side lordship, from the other vassalage. The tie might involve the obligation for support in war and it might carry with it the tenure of a landed estate. In the Carolingian period the combination of these elements was by no means necessary or usual; how it came to be made universal will be seen in connection with the feudalism of the ensuing period.

Com-  
mendation

<sup>13</sup> "Lord" is from the Anglo-Saxon *hlaford*, meaning provider of bread; "vassal" appears in Late Latin as *vassus*, one of various terms used to designate a man in the sense of a retainer.



## CHAPTER IX

### LIGHT IN THE DARK AGE

#### I. THE EASTERN WORLD

The  
contrast  
between  
east and  
west

(WHEN we refer to the five centuries that followed the barbarian invasions as the Dark Age, we are, of course, speaking in relative terms. The darkness was not absolute, for at no time was the light of culture entirely extinguished. It is in fact possible, by concentrating attention on forms and traditions, to obtain an impression of wonderful continuity from ancient to mediæval times. This is to gain a false perspective of European history. If, rather, we contrast actual conditions in the seventh century with those in the second century, we seem to be faced with the results of a frightful catastrophe—the utter collapse of a great civilization. In the west, at any rate, there was a Dark Age, which was very dark indeed. The Carolingian Empire marked some improvement; yet its relative barbarism will at once be appreciated when it is compared with the contemporary empire of the Arabs.

The Arab  
Empire  
under the  
Abbasids

Just before Pepin was crowned at Soissons, the Ommiads were supplanted in the caliphate by the Abbasids. The second of the latter dynasty was al-Mansur (754-75), who designed and built the new capital at Bagdad on the Tigris. Soon after him reigned the famous Harun-al-Rashid (786-809), and the latter was succeeded, after a short interval, by al-Mamun (813-33). Under these gorgeous princes the caliphate lost the remaining vestiges of its old simplicity. The rulers of Islam were no longer Arab chieftains living on terms of equality with their nomad followers, but oriental despots raised to a dizzy height above their subjects, among whom the great families of Mecca and Medina were treated quite like other Mohammedans. The Abbasid revolution thus reacted to the benefit of a wide constituency—especially the Iranian population of Persia—and this fact gave an entirely new character to the civilization of the succeeding period.

By breaking the old aristocracy, however, the Abbasids accelerated the transformation of their empire into a loose union of autonomous provinces. Spain, as has been noted, led the way, coming under the absolute control of an Ommiad emir at Cor-

dova. In 788 another rebel, claiming descent from Fatima and Ali, secured dominion over the westernmost portion of Africa, the modern Morocco, where the succeeding emir built himself a new capital at Fez. Early in the next century the emir of Kairawan made himself virtually independent, and after 868 a Turkish adventurer secured a similar position in Egypt and Syria. Meanwhile, to the eastward, various powerful governors had successfully followed the same policy. By the end of the ninth century, accordingly, the caliph governed only the central portion of his theoretical empire, and even there he lived in constant fear of his own ministers and generals. He kept himself in magnificent isolation, guarded by half-savage Turks; and to maintain his authority in the palace, he developed a capricious terrorism equaled in few epochs of history. Such a despot, actually known to few outside his harem and his household of slaves and eunuchs, lacked the heroic and inspiring character of the early caliphs. His headship of the faith remained little more than a legal form; religious unity was lost among the "two and seventy jarring sects" of Omar Khayyam.

Nevertheless, the great Arab empire continued to possess a common civilization that sharply distinguished it from the rest of the world. From the Oxus and the Himalayas to the Sahara and the Pyrenees, Moslem society and culture were very much the same. Despite the endless quarrels of Mohammedan theologians, all recognized the sanctity of the Koran and obeyed the command that it should not be used in translation—a fact which maintained the supremacy of Arabic throughout the world of Islam. No one could there be thought educated unless he knew the vernacular of the Prophet. And that flexible language soon proved itself equally well adapted to the technicalities of philosophy and science. By the eighth century relatively few who spoke Arabic were of pure Arab descent; they were not even all Moslems. Thousands of Hindus, Parsees, Jews, and Christians learned the dominant tongue as a matter of course, and so came into a position to combine the learning of a dozen scattered countries. Through them the culture of Islam rapidly developed the cosmopolitan richness and variety that characterized it under the Abbasids.

The  
Arabic  
language

The linguistic unity of the Arab dominions was also a great stimulus to commerce. The Moslem conquest by no means ruined the cities of Syria, Egypt, and Africa. Their economic connec-

Trade and  
culture

tions with Greece and Italy were, it is true, largely destroyed; but to make up for the severance, they were now brought into much closer contact with Persia and the orient. The caravan trade of central Asia naturally fell into the hands of the Arabs, who had long been expert in that business. They brought the precious goods of China and the Indies direct to the ports of Syria. On the north they had access to the Black Sea and, through the nomads of the steppe, dealt largely in furs and slaves from eastern Europe. From Egypt they penetrated into Ethiopia, and from the Sahara into the gold-bearing country about the Niger. By sea their ships linked the coasts of India, Persia, Arabia, and eastern Africa as far south as Madagascar. Much of this traffic converged on Egypt, where Alexandria and Cairo enjoyed unparalleled prosperity through the trans-shipment of goods bound to the westward. The Mediterranean, except for the Adriatic and the Ægean, became virtually the sole possession of the Moslems; from the mountains of Asia Minor to those of Spain the shores of the mainland were all theirs. In the ninth century one or another of the nearby emirs secured the Balearic Islands, Sicily, Malta, and Crete. A hundred years later it was still doubtful whether Italy could be successfully defended by the Christians.

In spite of these offensives in the Mediterranean, however, the great period of Arab conquest had come to a close. The sumptuous wealth of the Moslem cities in the following centuries was the product of their teeming economic life, rather than of war. There was, of course, fighting on the frontiers, and the chronic rivalries of princes led to occasional hostilities; yet in general the age was one of peace and prosperity. The commerce and industry of Islam then approached—possibly surpassed—the standards of the ancient world. Mercantile activity produced not only material riches, but also, by stimulating the interchange of customs and ideas, a more lasting treasure of cultural achievement. Although we admit that Arabic civilization was the work of a very heterogeneous population, the Arabs deserve the chief credit. It was that talented and adaptable people who built the empire and established the traditions that governed its destiny.

Arabic art      The art of the Arabs was typical of their civilization. Odds and ends from the four corners of the earth were combined with new elements to produce a strikingly original result. In architecture, for example, the Arabs obviously began with the forms

of construction already existing in Persia and Syria. The first of the great Mohammedan buildings was the so-called mosque of Omar at Jerusalem—a timber dome placed over an octagon of masonry. It employs semicircular arches supported by columns taken from older structures and is principally decorated with mosaic. Here is very little that can be surely ascribed to the Arabs themselves. On the other hand, the splendid mosque at Damascus, built early in the eighth century, contains many original features. The horseshoe arch appears prominently and the whole building is dominated by minarets—slender towers from which the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer (see Plate II). The greater mosques that subsequently arose at Cairo, Bagdad, Cordova, and elsewhere repeated the same elements: domes and cupolas in a variety of forms, lofty minarets, and horseshoe arches, often pointed or cusped (see Figure 12 and Plate II, Cordova).

As far as painting and sculpture were concerned, Moslems from the outset suffered from one disadvantage: they were forbidden by the Koran to make representations of human beings or of any living animal. The rule was not always observed in secular art, but it was natural that in the prohibited field Arabs should make no remarkable progress. By way of compensation Moslem artists came to excel in all forms of ornamentation that were strictly lawful. Following models already perfected in the orient, they drew charming patterns from flowers and leaves, either naturalistic or conventionalized. And from geometrical figures they developed the intricate and graceful designs that became known as arabesques. These schemes of decoration were applied in rich profusion to both the interior and the exterior of the later Moslem buildings—among which the most familiar are the Moorish palaces of Spain. Even greater skill was shown in the minor arts that flourished everywhere throughout the Mohammedan world. Whether he worked in stone, wood, ivory, metal, glass, pottery, cloth, or leather, the Arab craftsman produced things of surpassing beauty. No lengthy description of such products can be attempted here; it need only be said that among the great artistic triumphs of the world rank the Arabic luster ware, enameled pottery, brass and steel inlaid with gold and silver,<sup>1</sup> carved ivory, brocaded silk, pile carpets, and tooled leather.

<sup>1</sup> Called damascening, after the city of Damascus.

Arabic  
literature  
and  
scholarship

Poets had flourished in Arabia long before Mohammed's time; and although he was not very favorable to the profession, it continued to enjoy great honor. As the Arabs spread over the world and increasingly adopted city life, the older poetic forms naturally became obsolete and popular demand shifted from conventional tales of tribal warfare to matters of personal experience—in other words, toward lyric themes. Yet the old passion for story-telling lived on; tales from every land were reworked and put into prose. This was the origin of the collection known as the *Thousand and One Nights*, which in some measure reflects the early Abbasid age. As would be expected, the Arabs also maintained a high standard in the writing of history. Merely to list the names and works of important Moslem historians between the seventh and tenth centuries would fill a page of print—a catalogue that must be left to more specialized works on the subject.

Exactly what, if any, influence was exerted in Christian Europe by the more popular forms of Arabic literature remains a controversial subject. In the realm of learning, however, no one has doubted or can doubt that western borrowings from the Arabs were of epoch-making importance. The marauders and conquerors of the seventh century, of course, brought with them nothing that could be called scholarship. The rudiments of their science and philosophy, as of their arts, had to be taken from the lands which they invaded. There, especially in the cities of Syria and Egypt, they found great schools with traditions of study running back to the golden age of Athens. Immense libraries were stocked with books embodying the accumulated wisdom of a thousand years. But since they were in Greek, they remained closed to the inquiring minds of Islam, as did the writings of Hebrews, Persians, Chinese, and Hindus. Such works had to be translated into Arabic before the cause of higher education among the Moslems could be far advanced.

Translations from  
the Greek

With the development of a cosmopolitan civilization under the Abbasids, conditions became favorable for the introduction of Hellenistic learning. The needed intermediaries were readily found. Since the time of Justinian, various groups of Christians, particularly Nestorians and Jacobites,<sup>2</sup> had extended their missionary efforts far into central Asia, and through their agency many Greek works had already been put into Persian and Ara-

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 112.

maic. Besides, there were numerous Hellenized Jews who had been led to make a thorough study of Arabic. Thanks to the patronage of the caliphs the work of translation was rapidly accomplished. Begun under al-Mansur, it was continued under al-Rashid and greatly developed under al-Mamun, who organized a regular school for the study of Greek philosophy and science. The chief translator of this later period was a Nestorian Christian named Hunain ibn Ishaq (d. 877)—a skilled physician and a prolific writer. Hunain and his pupils translated Galen, parts of Hippocrates, and a large number of other books on medicine and allied subjects. Ransacking the cities of Egypt and Syria for manuscripts, they formed at Bagdad one of the greatest libraries in the world. Other scholars, meanwhile, had turned their attention to such authors as Aristotle, Euclid, Archimedes, and Ptolemy. Eventually the whole body of Hellenistic learning was made available to Moslem students, who thus continued without a break the work of the Greeks under the Roman Empire.

The mass of writings to which the Arabs fell heir was already a strange mixture, combining classic philosophy and science with mystic elements from Neo-Platonism. To this mixture the Arabs contributed the sacred tradition of the Koran, together with considerable lore from Persia, India, and even China. The result was an original advance in thought which can be best appreciated by examining particular fields of study. Hunain, the translator, was one of four great Arabic scholars in the later ninth century. As an author, he added to the wisdom gained from wide reading the results of his own experience as a practising physician. Among his works were commentaries on the classics of medicine, a compendium of the subject as a whole, and the earliest known treatise on the eye. A contemporary of his, al-Kindi, has the distinction of being called the first Arab philosopher. He was, at any rate, the first Arab to make an extensive study of Aristotle and so to become interested in the reconciliation of that system with orthodox Moslem theology—a project that was to occupy his successors for many centuries. Al-Kindi was a sort of universal scholar, writing not merely on logic and metaphysics, but also on meteorology, optics, specific gravity, and music. The reputation which he came to enjoy may be judged from the fact that—rightly or wrongly—no less than 265 books are attributed to him.

Philosophy and science in the ninth century

In astronomy and mathematics, meanwhile, we have the great

names of al-Farghani and al-Khwarizmi. Since the reign of al-Mansur the Arabs had been acquainted with the work of Ptolemy, thenceforth known as the *Almagest*.<sup>3</sup> And together with this book, they had come to be familiar with the astronomical instruments of the ancients—especially with the astrolabe, by which the relative positions of the heavenly bodies can be ascertained and data secured for the calculation of latitude. The next step was to build observatories for the compilation of elaborate astronomical tables. With the expert aid of al-Farghani, the undertaking was carried out by the caliph al-Mamun. The result, of course, was increasing activity in the field of mathematics, and it was there that the Arabs made their most important contribution to science.

Tenth  
Century

From the Greeks had come the perfected geometry of Euclid, together with Ptolemy's fundamentals of trigonometry. The latter was now greatly developed by the scholars of Islam, and in addition they virtually created the mathematical process which still bears its Arabic name, algebra. These were great accomplishments, and yet they were less important than the invention of our everyday arithmetic. The nine signs which we know as the Arabic numerals were apparently derived from the Hindus. Besides, the Arabs employed a zero, by means of which figures may be arranged in columns to designate units, tens, hundreds, thousands, and so on. Just how the system came to be perfected is still being debated by historians; but as far as may now be judged, the introduction of the all-important zero was original with the Arabs. What a vast improvement the new arithmetic was over that of the Latin world may be realized by any one who tries to add, subtract, multiply, or divide while using only the Roman numerals.

In the following period Arabic science continued to make splendid progress. To mention only a few of many distinguished names, we encounter in the tenth century al-Razi (Rhazes),<sup>4</sup> physician and writer on medicine, physics, astronomy, and theology; al-Farabi (Alpharabius), philosopher and musician; Ibn al-Haitham (Alhazen), brilliant student of optics; al-Battani (Albategnius), mathematician and astronomer. Nor was this

<sup>3</sup> This is the Latinized form of the Arabic corruption of certain Greek words in the original title.

<sup>4</sup> The names in parentheses are those given to the Arabs by Latin writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See below, chs. xviii, xxi.

the end. Medicine reached a new height with the illustrious Ibn Sina, more familiar to us as Avicenna (d. 1037); general science with al-Biruni (d. 1048); astronomy with the loved poet, Omar Khayyam (d. 1123); and philosophy with Ibn Rushd, best known as Averroës (d. 1198). To discuss the contributions of all these writers is out of the question in this cursory sketch. It may, however, be noted that the finest medical essay of the Middle Ages was that of al-Razi on smallpox; that the theory of measured music<sup>5</sup> began with al-Farabi; and that the study of mirrors and lenses by Ibn al-Haitham was a noteworthy step toward the invention of the microscope and the telescope.

A very remarkable feature of Arabic science was its practical aspect. The greatest of the theoretical writers by no means despised an interest in common things. A chemist might write not only on the composition of the universe, but on paint, dye-stuffs, and glass-making. Dozens of handbooks were composed on animals, plants, trees, stones, and metals. In one way or another, the Arabs covered the whole range of manufacture, agriculture and navigation. Through trade they came to lead the world in their knowledge of geography.<sup>6</sup> It was their voyagers who seem to have made the earliest use of the magnetic compass. Paper-making and block-printing<sup>7</sup> were both Chinese inventions, introduced into the west by the Arabs. Their knowledge of fireworks, drawn from the same source, was probably the foundation for the European invention of gunpowder.<sup>8</sup>

To the mediæval scholarship, as well as to the mediæval art of Islam, the world is profoundly indebted. Yet there were many fields in which the Arabs, like all their contemporaries, went astray. Although they carried out much sound research in astronomy and medicine, both subjects remained encumbered with mistaken theories and popular superstitions. In general, the astronomers of Islam based their work on Ptolemy's *Almagest*, which consecrated the notion of a geocentric universe. According to that doctrine, the round earth was encircled, one after the other, by the spheres of air, water, and fire—thus making up the four material elements of Aristotle. About these stationary spheres revolved the seven planets: the moon, Mercury, Mars,

Astronomy  
and  
astrology

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 462.

<sup>6</sup> See below, p. 654.

<sup>7</sup> See below, p. 715.

<sup>8</sup> See below, p. 629.



the sun, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn. The eighth heaven was that of the fixed stars, including the belt of constellations known as the zodiac. To account for the apparent motions of all these bodies, Ptolemy had perfected a series of intricate mathematical explanations. The planets, for instance, were supposed to describe not only great orbits about the earth, but at the same time lesser circles called epicycles.<sup>9</sup> Such formulæ, together with the whole Ptolemaic system, were commonly accepted in the Moslem world, for they were sufficiently accurate to comprehend any observations that could then be made. The Arabs, however, elaborated the Greek concept of the celestial spheres by imagining them not as geometrical abstractions but as actual shells of translucent substance, like crystal.

To supply a motive force impelling the stars along their several paths, even the best scholars fell back on an appeal to angels or spirits of some sort; and at that point science tended to give way to mythology. From very ancient times the seven planets had been associated with divisions of time,<sup>10</sup> traits of human character, metals, and many other things. The signs of the zodiac were thought to have mystic significance in various ways, especially in connection with the health and happiness of individual men. By mathematical computation, one familiar with the stars could evaluate the celestial influences that had ruled any person since the moment of his birth. The casting of a horoscope then seemed no more mysterious than the prediction of an eclipse. If the sun could affect the growth of crops and the moon could control the movement of the tides, why could not Mars govern the course of a war or Venus that of a love affair? In the absence of scientific demonstration to the contrary, the ancient lore of the Chaldæans and Persians naturally continued to flourish among the Arabs. Indeed, for many centuries to come, every astronomer, merely by applying his science, was likely to be also an astrologer.

In Arabic medicine the situation was very similar. Despite

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<sup>9</sup> By way of illustration, imagine a long arm revolving on a pivot; then a short arm revolving on a pivot at the end of the long arm; finally a light attached to the end of the short arm.

<sup>10</sup> The week is, of course, a group of seven days named for the seven planets. The English Sunday, Monday, and Saturday still betray their celestial connections. The other days commemorate Germanic deities substituted for Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus. The latter names clearly appear in French: *mardi* (*martis dies*), *jeudi* (*jovis dies*), etc.

much excellent work, the science as a whole was retarded by undue veneration for the authority of Galen. His physiology was in particular the source of endless confusion. The vital principle in the human body, he taught, was the *pneuma* (literally, breath), which was manifested in three forces: the psychical, the animal, and the natural. The first had its seat in the brain, the second in the heart, the third in the liver; and they respectively acted through the nerves, the arteries, and the veins. Man, said Galen, was the universe in miniature. Corresponding to the four Aristotelian elements (earth, air, water, and fire) were the four bodily humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile (choler), and black bile (melancholy). As one of these humors predominated over the others, the individual's temperament was said to be sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, or melancholic.

Medicine  
and  
alchemy

This fantastic system, accepted without question by the scholars of Islam, readily lent itself to combination with the current beliefs in astrology, magic numbers, and the mystic properties of things in general. Under such circumstances, the philosopher who sought to discover the secrets of medicine and chemistry was inevitably drawn into what we know as alchemy. If all substances are formed from common elements, transmutation of one into another is theoretically possible. The alchemist's ideal was the same as that of the modern scientist, but the mediæval scholar wasted his time in seeking impossible refinements. For example, by purifying ordinary mercury he tried to obtain philosophical mercury—which would be the veritable principle of mutability. With such an elixir, one could change anything to anything else! Centuries were to pass before the doctors either of Islam or of Christendom were to decide that the pursuit was vain.

## 2. THE WESTERN WORLD

Even a cursory review of the subject demonstrates the absurdity of regarding either the Byzantine or the Frankish empires as bulwarks of civilization against the destructive hordes of Asia. If Europe had been taken by the Moslems, its subsequent development would have been vastly different, but the immediate result of the conquest might well have been to raise the level of material prosperity and of culture. The history of Byzantine civilization, when all possible credit has been allowed it, is one of general stagnation. It was important as a conservative, not

The decline  
of  
culture  
in the west

as a progressive, force. To balance the many original accomplishments of the Arabs during the centuries after Heraclius, is there one forward-looking achievement that can be attributed to the Greeks of the old empire? In the west, despite the heroic deeds of an occasional statesman or reformer, the story is one of steady deterioration.

Economically, the Dark Age was the culmination of a long decline—the reversion to a dominantly agrarian society, marked by the near extinction of commerce and urban life. An accompaniment of this social decay was the gradual failure of Latin culture. The fine arts suffered first. From the third century on, Roman architecture and sculpture lost all vitality. The east, it is true, witnessed a noteworthy artistic revival with the perfection in the sixth century of the style known as Byzantine. This style, however, remained essentially foreign to the west, which of its own produced nothing remarkable in architecture for another five hundred years. Latin letters proved more vigorous. The classical tradition outlived the disastrous third century and kept its fascination for the educated Italian even into the reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. That was the end. Thenceforth the old literature ceased to live, and became merely a subject to be studied in the schools. Poetic composition based on quantity entirely lapsed, except as an antiquarian diversion. Latin prose no longer followed the ancient standards; although it was adapted to new and useful purposes, it developed in ways that would have seemed barbarous to Cicero.

The degeneration of Latin As a matter of fact, the average Roman had never talked the language of Cicero; with the passage of time, the divergence between that language and the spoken vernacular became wider and wider. In the east, literary Greek was kept alive through the unbroken traditions of classical education; in the west, the failure of such education made a knowledge of literary Latin increasingly difficult to obtain. By the seventh century, a man like Gregory of Tours found it impossible to observe the conventional rules of grammar because the dialect of the countryside had long ignored them. Genders, declensions, and conjugations became hopelessly confused; case endings were dropped off; construction was revolutionized by the increased employment of prepositions and conjunctions; tense came to be expressed by auxiliaries; spelling was altered to fit local pronunciation; many words were forgotten, while new words were introduced from colloquial

usage. Long before the barbarian invasions, a good deal of German had crept into Latin through the influence of the army, and the process was of course accelerated in the later centuries.

The depth of this degradation was reached in Merovingian Gaul. There the Latin even of the king's official instruments became unspeakably bad and was matched by a handwriting that to us seems childish grotesque. Yet the ignorant clerks who wrote the jargon were attempting to use a learned tongue. That was the trouble. If they had composed these acts in the spoken vernacular, the result would probably have been more sensible and pleasing. It would assuredly have been of great interest to philologists, who are still disputing many points in connection with the origin of the Romance languages. It is, of course, universally held that the modern French, Provençal, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Rumanian were derived from vulgar Latin, i.e., the language of the people rather than of books. But the extent to which they were individually affected by pre-Roman elements remains doubtful. That, for example, the French *u* and the French nasalization of a vowel before *n* or *m* were due to peculiarities of Gallic pronunciation is affirmed by some scholars and denied by others.

The origin  
of the  
Romance  
languages

In the present connection such minor questions may be left to one side. The important matter is that, in spite of all invasion and conquest by Germanic peoples, the spoken Latin of the native population persisted throughout a wide region of western Europe. This language is referred to by contemporary writers as the *lingua romana* (French *roman*, English *romance*). One or another of its dialects has been continuously used by the mass of the people in Italy, Gaul, and Spain, where the Goths, Lombards, Burgundians, Franks, and other Germans rapidly forgot their own tongues. In Africa Romance was lost before the Berber speech of the ancient inhabitants and the Arabic of the Moslem invaders; but in Spain historical accident—of which more later—brought about its ultimate victory. The Greek of southern Italy, which persisted far into the Middle Ages, was an exception, as were certain languages of Gaul.

From time immemorial the slopes of the Pyrenees have been held by the Basques, who have maintained their own vernacular despite the advent of Celt, Latin, German, and Arab. Basque, therefore, is one of the very oldest languages of Europe and on that account is of especial interest to the philologist. Another

Germanic  
and Celtic  
languages

isolated region of Gaul was Brittany, which was settled by Celtic-speaking Britons during the migration of the Anglo-Saxons. Of much greater importance historically is the linguistic frontier which now cuts across Belgium and northeastern France, and which has remained fundamentally unchanged since the fifth century. Ever since the left bank of the Rhine was given by the Romans to Franks and Alamans as *fœderati*, Germanic dialects have prevailed along it. From the speech of the Alamans is directly descended that of the present-day Alsatians; and Flemish, like the closely related Dutch, is a modern form of the Low German spoken by the Salian Franks. Elsewhere in Gaul the triumph of Romance was complete, as will be more fully explained when we come to the subject of mediæval French literature.

Of the old Celtic tongue little trace remained at the time of the barbarian invasions except in place names, such as those derived from the designations of Gallic tribes.<sup>11</sup> In Britain, on the other hand, Latinization had been thorough only in the south-east of the island, and there the process was undone by the Anglo-Saxon conquest. To the north and west persisted the Celtic dialects which are today represented by Welsh and Gaelic. Between them and the Germanic speech of the invaders spoken Latin virtually perished. Anglo-Saxon, which is known to us from writings of the seventh and following centuries, shows almost no Romance borrowings—a fact which testifies to the solidity of the barbarian occupation. In respect to language, as to institutions, the English country was an extension of continental Germany.

Slavic  
languages

On the east, the boundary of Charlemagne's empire virtually coincided with the linguistic frontier, except that to the north the former excluded the Germanic nations of Scandinavia. From the Baltic to the eastern shore of the Adriatic extended a vast territory throughout which the dominant speech was Slavic. There, as early as the Carolingian period, divergence had already produced the two major groups of North Slavs and South Slavs. Of the many dialects spoken by the former, the chief descendants are Russian, Polish, Czech, and Slovak, to which are related such Baltic languages as Lithuanian and Lettish. Within the southern group are classified the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and

<sup>11</sup> So, for example, Auvergne from the *Averni*, Poitou from the *Pictavi*, Reims from the *Remi*, Soissons from the *Suessiones*, Amiens from the *Ambiani*, Paris from the *Parisii*, etc.

Bulgarians; for the last-named, though originally Asiatic, eventually adopted the Slavic speech of their dependents.<sup>12</sup>

In the eighth century the Balkan peninsula had as intricate a mixture of peoples as it has today. Since the time of Justinian, Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs had gradually occupied the interior, crushing or driving out the resident Germans. The Greeks held Thrace, the coast of Macedonia, and most of the Peloponnesus. Latin was still heard along the Dalmatian shore, but throughout the rest of Illyricum it had disappeared. Elsewhere in the Balkans there extended a wild jumble of nationalities which has continued to defy systematic classification. Here, preeminently, language is no test of race. Many of the nomadic invaders, like the Bulgars, became Slavized; others, along with thousands of Slavs, seem to have become merged in a Greek- or Latin-speaking population. By some strange accident Latin was carried east into Dacia and so became the basis of the modern Rumanian. Just how this came about remains a mystery, for the old story that the speech of the ancient Roman garrison survived the devastating floods of Sarmatians, Goths, Heruls, Huns, Bulgars, Avars, and other savage invaders is utterly incredible. But without stopping longer on the European confusion of tongues, let us return to the simpler topic of Latin education.

The collapse of the imperial government in the west necessarily involved a revolution in methods of instruction. As the state schools disappeared, and with them the old professional teachers, learning became virtually a monopoly of the clergy, who had their own ideals of education. The attitude of the church fathers has already been well illustrated in the views of Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory the Great. All four were fundamentally mystic, in that they placed first the necessity of faith and to that entirely subordinated the use of the rational faculties. . All, furthermore, were enthusiastic advocates of monasticism, and three of them at one time or another were actually monks themselves. Jerome and Augustine were both scholarly men who in youth had been passionately devoted to pagan letters, but who, by virtue of what they considered supernatural warnings, deserted that calling for the service of the church. Thenceforth their study, though profound, was consecrated to pious ends: to refute pagans and heretics, to expound the truths of revelation, and in all practical

The ideals  
of ecclesi-  
astical  
education

<sup>12</sup> See below, pp. 324 f.

ways to advance the cause of Christianity. A passionate delight in literature or learning as ends in themselves they were inclined to consider sinful. Gregory admonished the erudite to forsake their "foolish wisdom" for the "wise foolishness of God."

Monastic  
schools

Although similar opinions were held by the great organizers of monasticism, the varieties of monastic discipline permitted wide divergence of conduct. Among the Irish monks, in particular, there were many who spent their lives in studying and copying texts; yet their conscious purpose was solely the promotion of the true faith. Through pious works each hoped to attain salvation, and by spreading the knowledge of sacred books he hoped to convert the heathen. These Irish monks, it should be remembered, commonly acted as priests among the people, and for that calling education was especially demanded. Latin was not their native language; to read it and to write it, they had to obtain formal instruction. For this purpose the study of pagan letters continued to be thought essential. The best models of composition were known to be the classics, and from them might also be gleaned many edifying lessons in human character and conduct. To combat worldliness, should not one first become familiar with it?

The Benedictine system of education seems to have given less encouragement to scholarship. Benedict, of course, authorized a limited amount of clerical work; the monastery had to have misals from which to learn the routine of divine service, and books for those brothers who knew how to read. To supply this demand, younger monks were to be given instruction by those most competent to teach them, and boys from the outside might be permitted to share the lessons thus offered. Nevertheless, the Benedictine monastery was not primarily an educational institution; the religious life which it enjoined consisted essentially of divine worship alternating with manual labor. Certain hours were devoted, by way of rest, to reading or contemplation; but the average monk would be neither willing nor able to engage in arduous study. It was exceptional that a Benedictine house became a center of intellectual life.

In the course of the seventh and eighth centuries Benedictine monasticism was rapidly extended all through the west of Europe, superseding in particular the organization fostered by St. Columban and his followers on the continent. The change was in the nature of a practical reform sponsored by the papacy, and

greatly contributed to the efficiency of the church cannot be denied. By the strict isolation of the regular clergy, however, the monastery lost whatever prominence it had enjoyed under the Irish system as a center of education for priests. Each monastery of monks became subject to the discipline prescribed by the abbot. If he chanced to have scholarly leanings, his house might become famous for its learning; but such abbots were relatively few. The average monastic library in this early age was only a press containing perhaps a score of books—mainly those needed for Christian worship. The average monastic school was a small group engaged in the study of elementary subjects like grammar and Latin composition. More advanced work was a matter of individual enterprise and was all too often overbalanced by the illiteracy of the majority.

The secular clergy, meanwhile, were left responsible for the work of the church in the world. To accomplish this work, priests had to have a certain amount of education. If the education could not be obtained in monasteries, the bishops would provide it. Eventually the cathedral school became a permanent feature of ecclesiastical organization, but in the early period, if such an institution existed, it remained very obscure. And we may be sure that, at least in eighth-century Gaul, the priesthood was generally debased. Even the bishops were frequently ignorant and worldly, spending their lives in family feud, political intrigue, warfare, hunting, and other favorite pursuits of the semi-barbarous nobleman. Those exceptional prelates who were competent to act as intellectual leaders found their energies so absorbed by the Christianization of new countries, or the attempted reform of old ones, that much scholarly endeavor was beyond them. It is not remarkable that, under such circumstances, the seventh and eighth centuries were a singularly unproductive age in literature and learning. Authors worth mention in the history of European thought were exceedingly few, as such as there were had a mental outlook which to us seems incredibly childlike. If they were the great teachers, what shall we think of their pupils?

The enormous success of Gregory the Great as a writer was of course, due to his genius for explaining large subjects in simple language; men used his popularizations, as far as possible, in preference to older and more difficult books. The same tendency was clearly marked in all fields; for a long time, in fact,

The secular clergy and education

Writers of the Dark Age: Orosius



the decline of scholarship had stimulated the production of manuals and epitomes, which in turn were frequently combined into still briefer texts. In this way the body of actual knowledge among the learned suffered a continuous loss of substance, and men were confirmed in the pernicious habit of accepting statements merely because they had long been repeated. Among the post-classical authors whose works were constantly cited as authoritative were, in addition to the church fathers, Boëthius, Martianus Capella, Priscian, and Orosius. Of these the first three have already received brief notice;<sup>18</sup> the fourth, a mediocre pupil of Augustine, enjoyed the distinction of having composed the most popular book on ancient history during the early Middle Ages. As a supplement to his master's *City of God*, Orosius developed the thesis that the distress of the contemporary world really marked an improvement in human affairs. To prove that ancient times had not been happy, he picked all the worst calamities from the classic authors and combined them in one horrific narrative. The result was not accurate history, but it was easy reading with an edifying moral—hence its great vogue in the schools.

Isidore of  
Seville  
(d. 636)

With the Vandal invasion, Roman Africa lost its intellectual preeminence, and Justinian's reconquest, however beneficial in other respects, brought about no revival of Latin scholarship. In Spain, meanwhile, the church preserved what for those times was a superior culture, the chief exponent of which was Isidore, bishop of Seville from about 600 to 636. As if to celebrate Gregory the Great's conversion of the Visigoths, Isidore produced a series of books that at once made his name synonymous with learning. He was a prolific author, writing on theology, history, literature, and various sciences. Finally, toward the close of his life, he composed a summary of his teachings and gave it the title of *Etymologia*. The book had an immense success, for it served as a manual of universal knowledge throughout the next five centuries.

From Isidore's *Etymologies*, accordingly, we may gain a more complete picture of what constituted wisdom in the Dark Age than from any other one volume. The key to the compilation is provided by its title. Isidore believed that the essence of a thing was contained in its name: by discovering the derivation and significance of the latter, one could come to understand the former. So his compendium resolves itself into a series of defini-

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 96.

tions based, often enough, on purely fanciful etymology. The following examples will at least serve to illustrate his approach to a variety of subjects.<sup>14</sup>

Night (*nox*) is so called from injuring (*a nocendo*), because it injures (*noceat*) the eyes. It has the light of the moon and the stars so that it may not be unadorned and that it may console all who work by night; also that the light may be adequately tempered for those creatures that cannot stand sunshine. . . .

Man (*homo*) is so called because he was made of earth (*ex humo*), as is told in Genesis. . . . The liver (*iecur*) has its name because there is resident the fire (*ignis*) which flies up into the brain. Thence it is spread to the eyes and the other senses and members and by its heat it changes into blood the liquid that it has drawn from food, and this blood it supplies to the several members to feed and nourish them. . . . The spleen (*splen*) is so called from corresponding to (*a supplemento*) the liver on the opposite side, so there may be no vacuum. And certain men say that it was also made on account of laughter. For by the spleen we laugh, by the bile we become angry, by the heart we gain wisdom, and by the liver we love.

The ant (*formica*) is so called because it carries morsels (*ferat micas*) of grain. For it looks forward to the future and in summer makes ready food to be eaten in the winter. At the harvest, too, it picks out wheat and refuses to touch barley. After a rain it always puts out the grain to dry. It is said that in Ethiopia there are ants shaped like dogs, which dig up golden sand with their feet and watch it to see that no one carries it off; and those that do take it the ants pursue and kill.

Frequently the author's information was somewhat more accurate than is displayed in these passages, but that was because he sometimes copied from more reliable sources. In no case can we attribute much critical insight to Isidore himself, for all he did was to compile a scrapbook from older writings, good, bad, and indifferent. Often he adopted statements that flatly contradicted each other, and occasionally we may be positive that he quite misunderstood what he sententiously repeated. Even the plan of the book Isidore in large part took from Cassiodorus, Theodoric's famous secretary, who had spent the last years of his life in a monastery and had there written a comprehensive sketch of ecclesiastical education. Following Cassiodorus, Isidore first sketched the seven liberal arts<sup>15</sup> and then passed on to

<sup>14</sup> *Etymologies*, v, 21; xi, 1; xii, 3.

<sup>15</sup> See the following section.

a review of medicine, law, theology, the natural sciences, and other great subjects—all covered in the same desultory and superficial way. The contrast between the book's lofty pretensions and its feeble performance seems ridiculous to us; yet we should not laugh at a man who was doing what he could to enlighten a desperately ignorant world.

Irish and Anglo-Saxon scholars  
In Italy, meanwhile, Gregory the Great had composed his many influential works, and in Gaul Gregory of Tours had written his truly remarkable *History of the Franks*. For real devotion to scholarship, however, we must turn rather to the British Isles, where monks had long been engaged in the enthusiastic study of ancient books, both Christian and pagan. By the seventh century we find not only Irish, but Anglo-Saxons, with an excellent knowledge of literary Latin and occasionally with a smattering of Greek as well. For instance, Aldhelm, a West Saxon who died in 709, had a wide acquaintance with the classics and, by way of diversion, composed riddles in accurate hexameter verse. The rather pedantic Aldhelm was to be far surpassed by the great scholar, Bede. He was a Northumbrian who, as a boy of seven (about 680), began his education under the famous Benedict Biscop, abbot of Wearmouth. Later Bede became a monk at Jarrow and there spent the rest of his life, dying in 735.

The Venerable Bede (d. 735)  
In Bede the learning of the Irish monks was combined with the devotion to papal ideals characteristic of the Anglo-Saxons. Thus, although Bede's familiarity with pagan letters was extensive and his knowledge of Greek remarkably thorough, all his wisdom was entirely subordinated to the practical ends of Christian teaching. His works never betray even an unconscious delight in literature as an æsthetic study. Among his numerous writings the majority are concerned with the exposition of Scripture—a field in which he of course followed the method consecrated by Gregory the Great, but in which he was far from being a mere imitator. For the use of his pupils he early composed a series of essays on grammar, orthography, and other elementary subjects, drawing liberally from Isidore. And that he maintained a lively interest in the sciences is proved by his publication, in later life, of two books: one on the nature of the universe and the other on chronology. The former is largely an adaptation of Isidore; but in the latter he made a valuable contribution to western education, popularizing the system of dating events as before Christ or in the year of the Lord (A. D.).

The book for which Bede has been chiefly famous is, however, the *Ecclesiastical History of the English*; and for once a mediæval reputation has been confirmed by modern criticism. Bede's history is by far the best written in western Europe between the seventh and the twelfth centuries, not merely because of his excellent Latin, but because of his superior intelligence and thorough honesty. He was almost invariably careful—and that was no less than a marvel—to give the source of his information. Much he reported on his own knowledge; for earlier events he relied on documents preserved in local archives, on written accounts that were provided for his express purpose, and on oral tradition which he got by interviewing persons known to be well informed. Often he quoted letters and charters in full; when the tale was only a matter of hearsay, he frankly said so.

We cannot, of course, expect Bede to be critical of the universal belief that human life was constantly subject to supernatural intervention. His books are filled with accounts of miracles, many of them given on his own authority. He says that a snake will die when brought into the air of Ireland; that even a tincture of scrapings from Irish manuscripts will cure snake-bite. He tells how the sudden recovery of a sick horse led to the discovery of the place where Oswald, the Christian king of Northumbria, had been slain in battle; and how a great hole was made there as people took the dirt away for the sake of its well-known curative properties. And there is much else of the same sort. Yet, if all the writers of the age had been as scrupulous as the venerable Anglo-Saxon scholar, how much better would be our knowledge of it!

### 3. THE CAROLINGIAN REVIVAL OF LEARNING

Recent criticism has tended somewhat to belittle Charlemagne's rôle as an innovator in the field of learning. That he was deeply interested in the cause of education is apparent from his own letters and decrees; many of his capitularies, as we have seen, dealt with the conduct of the clergy, and any great reform in that connection would have to be based on a general improvement of instruction. In all such matters, however, he was merely continuing projects begun under his predecessors. Both his father and his grandfather had warmly supported the activities of the papal missionaries and organizers, prominent among whom were learned Anglo-Saxon monks. The illustrious Boniface had long been a teacher before he undertook his greater work on the con-

Charle-  
magne  
and his  
palace  
school

continent. Clearly it was such men as he, rather than the Carolingians, who inaugurated the reform of the Frankish clergy. Yet it was characteristic of the emperor that he should assume the initiative in advancing any cause which he considered essential to the welfare of church or state.

There is no evidence that Charlemagne established any new system of schools for the kingdom at large; in this connection, as in others, he seems to have relied more on personal supervision than on radical innovation. He himself saw that learned abbots and bishops were placed in key positions, and through them strove to raise the general level of clerical education. It was already customary for a number of teachers to be attached to the royal court for the instruction of young nobles in elementary subjects. From such a nucleus Charlemagne early developed his famous palace school, which was to serve throughout his reign as a center of educational propaganda. And to superintend the work, he secured in 781 the distinguished Northumbrian scholar, Alcuin, who had long directed the most famous school in Britain—that of York, founded by Archbishop Egbert, a pupil of Bede.

Alcuin  
and his  
associates

Alcuin was therefore the representative of a noble tradition, and he was a man eminently fitted to carry out the king's plans. To Aix-la-Chapelle, Charlemagne's favorite residence, Alcuin attracted teachers from all sides—Irish, English, Italians, and Spaniards, as well as Franks of Gaul and Germany. Within this early generation were few noteworthy authors, but their enthusiasm for learning, imparted to their students, inspired the production of many influential works in the following century. On men from this group Charlemagne conferred great abbeys and bishoprics, intrusting to them the task of organizing local schools, collecting libraries, reproducing ancient texts, standardizing the services of the church, and improving the quality of ecclesiastical music. Such projects, backed by the amazing energy of the emperor himself, rapidly produced the cultural advance in his empire that is often known as the Carolingian Renaissance. The description is somewhat exaggerated. What was actually done was to make more general a system of education that already existed in isolated communities, particularly those of the British Isles.

Although in minor respects some of the Carolingian scholars may have surpassed Bede, on the average they were distinctly inferior. Alcuin's own books were not at all remarkable, con-

sisting chiefly of dialogues on the liberal arts and of commentaries on the Scriptures. In both respects his work was continued with great success by his pupil, Hrabanus Maurus, who rose to be abbot of Fulda and archbishop of Mainz (d. 856). Hrabanus wrote a number of books that were regarded as authoritative for centuries: among them a sort of universal encyclopædia, which was only a revision of Isidore's *Etymologies*; a long essay on the education of the clergy, which was largely a compilation of extracts from the church fathers; and many volumes of Biblical interpretation, using, of course, the allegorical approach. These products, on the whole, were characteristic of Carolingian scholarship, which but rarely ventured into the more dangerous fields of original speculation. A profound thinker was out of place in the ninth century; it was the very mediocrity of Hrabanus that assured his renown.

Historical  
writing:  
Paul the  
Deacon

Aside from official documents, our chief sources for the political history of the period are monastic annals—records of contemporary events kept year by year. When conscientiously written in one of the greater abbeys, such annals might be filled with interesting information; but all too often they degenerated into meager lists of deaths, calamities, and trivial portents. Of much greater interest from the literary point of view are two famous historians: one who ended and one who began his career during the reign of Charlemagne. Paul the Deacon was a Lombard who, after a number of years in the service of Desiderius, retired to the monastery of Monte Cassino and there devoted himself to study and writing. He was resident at Charlemagne's court for only a short time; we have no evidence that he was ever prominent in the palace school. Returning to Italy in 787, he spent his last years in composing the *History of the Lombards*—a work cut short by his death some time before 800. The book proved enormously popular not only because it told another chapter in the triumph of the orthodox faith, but because it was filled with a great variety of engaging stories. As already noted,<sup>18</sup> Paul's history is not to be trusted as a recital of fact. The earlier part is little more than picturesque legend and the author unfortunately did not live to reach the age of which he had direct knowledge.

About the time that Paul the Deacon was writing his history, a young Frank named Einhard came to the palace school from the

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 162.

Einhard  
(d. 840)

monastery of Fulda. Having been born beyond the Rhine, he spoke German as his native tongue, but through intensive study he had already obtained a fluent command of Latin. At Aix Einhard won the friendship of the emperor and more especially of Prince Louis, who, on becoming king, loaded him with offices and distinctions. Einhard thus was able to pursue a literary career without becoming either priest or monk, and while a mere layman to write the most remarkable biography of the early Middle Ages. Being steeped in the Latin classics, Einhard consciously set out, as a second Suetonius, to describe the deeds of another Cæsar, the late emperor Charlemagne. This fact is of great significance for evaluating his book as a historical source. In that respect it cannot always be taken literally, for the author constantly borrowed language from his model. Nevertheless, as a literary essay, Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* was a brilliant piece of work, made doubly remarkable by the environment in which it was produced. And parts of it have real historical worth. In particular, the graphic picture of the aged emperor is unforgettable and should be read by every one interested in the Carolingian age.

The fate of  
classical  
scholarship

Einhard, it is clear, represented that current of mediæval thought which prized literary study as something beyond an element of practical education. Like many of the Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks, he felt that, within limits, admiration of the classics was not incompatible with Christian character. In the ninth century there were even prominent clergymen who shared his attitude. Lupus, abbot of Ferrières, devoted much more time to pagan letters than to theology. And among less prominent students many are known to have attempted imitations of classic authors. To modern eyes the most remarkable of them was John the Scot, an Irishman who came to Gaul about the middle of the ninth century and who seems never to have secured ecclesiastical preferment. His knowledge of Greek was so excellent that he even tried his hand at verses in that language. But his truly significant accomplishment was a book which he called *On the Division of Nature*, a reconciliation of Christianity and Neo-Platonism, which few if any of his contemporaries could have understood. John the Scot was the only man of the period whose mentality approached that of the greater church fathers, and he had no intellectual heirs.

However brilliant the occasional success of an Irish, Anglo-

Saxon, or Frankish student in literary experimentation, they were the advocates of a lost cause. Scholarly investigation of antiquities was out of the question, and an uncritical devotion to the ideals of ancient authors could lead only to affectation. The future lay with the men who gave their energies to the advancement of practical education, such as had been advocated by Gregory the Great. In theory the instruction given by the Carolingian schools, whether attached to monastery or cathedral, was based on the seven liberal arts. This was an idea which had been constantly emphasized by authoritative writers for some hundreds of years. Under Charlemagne it was given final consecration by the teachings of Alcuin and his associates. The sacred seven were divided into two groups: the *trivium*, consisting of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic; and the *quadrivium*, consisting of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. What of all this did the student actually get?

In the first place, he would learn to read and write Latin, which in itself was an accomplishment far beyond the average prince of that time. Einhard tells us that even the great emperor never learned the art. He kept writing materials under his pillow and in moments of leisure attempted to master the formation of letters, "but he began it too late and the results were mediocre." Having gained a knowledge of elementary Latin, the youth could proceed with such fundamental texts as Donatus and Priscian,<sup>17</sup> together with the popular commentaries by Martianus Capella, Boëthius, Isidore, Bede, Alcuin, and Hrabanus. Besides, if he were to perfect his style, the leading masters agreed that he should have at least selections from the pagan classics. The more zealous learner would not stop with a mere knowledge of grammatical construction; according to ancient tradition, the first of the liberal arts included much that we should call literature or history. This, however, was a secondary consideration, pursuit of which depended on the talents and sympathies of the instructor.

In rhetoric and dialectic ordinary instruction was restricted to the reading of standard treatises by Alcuin and his predecessors, all of whom said very much the same. Classical oratory had lost all practical meaning except as it might be adapted to the needs of the Christian preacher. To be effective, he now had to speak in the vernacular and would probably find the homilies of Gregory

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 96.



more useful than theoretical discussions of the ancient art. Dialectic, too, had slight practical importance in the Carolingian age; and even if curiosity impelled a student to exhaust all his authorities, he could not progress very far. After working back to Boëthius, he could read in translation Porphyry's *Isagoge* and those logical essays of Aristotle which were called the *Organum*. Of Plato nothing beyond the *Timæus* was available in Latin. All the rest of Greek philosophy and science, aside from scattering quotations, remained unknown in the west.

The *quadrivium*  
From this fact it follows that the learning imparted under the head of the *quadrivium* was negligible. Neither the Romans nor the Greeks before them had been able to do much with arithmetic because they had continued to use letters for numerals—a system under which addition and subtraction remain very formidable operations, while multiplication and division are almost impossible. And since even Euclid's geometry was lacking in the western libraries, the Carolingian scholar could not be expected to be very proficient in advanced mathematics. On the theoretic side he had only such essays as those of Boëthius, Isidore, and Bede; on the practical side he was interested in nothing more abstruse than determining the date of Easter (the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox). Music had been included in the *quadrivium* through the Greek discovery of the mathematical ratios underlying the musical scale; but the notion of music as a liberal art was now little more than a vague tradition, and the actual technique of playing instruments or of singing was not a subject of academic instruction.

The development of hand-writing  
Accordingly, aside from fundamental training in grammar, the education offered by the Carolingian school was very superficial, consisting of little more than definitions and catch phrases. Compared with the contemporary learning of the Arabic world, that of the Latin west was puerile. Yet, if it had not been for the enthusiasm of Charlemagne and his helpers, our irreparable losses of ancient literature would have been immensely greater; for many a classic has come down to us through a single manuscript written in some Frankish monastery. To the obscure scholars of the eighth and ninth centuries our modern culture is also indebted for the system of letters in which this book is printed—a remarkable development, of which only the first stage may be considered here.

For their formal writings the Romans employed the large

square letters which are familiar to us as capitals; for informal writing they employed, as we do, a running hand, or cursive. Both, in modified form, persisted into the subsequent period. Roman cursive finally degenerated into the atrocious scrawl of the Merovingian charters, but in the meantime what may be called a cursive influence had changed the shape of the large hand in which books were commonly written. In the uncial style rounded forms came to characterize many of the letters, such as **ƿ** for T, **ð** for D, and **m** for M. And as the breakdown of oriental commerce took papyrus out of the western markets and compelled the use of parchment, the factor of economy became increasingly potent. To get more words on a page, the scribe had to use smaller letters and squeeze them closer together. Some, to preserve their distinctive shapes, were extended above the line, others below. The ultimate result was the form of writing called minuscule—little letters, with capitals inserted for emphasis—as distinguished from majuscule, which consisted only of large letters.

**I** n secundo uolens exponere quomodo duos patres potuerit  
habere ioseph. cuius coniunx dicta est uirgo maria. illud

FIGURE 3.—EXAMPLE OF CAROLINGIAN MINUSCULE.\*

The precise way in which this evolution came about is a highly technical and somewhat controversial subject. It need only be remarked here that by the eighth century there were several well-defined minuscule hands: the Irish, from which was derived the Anglo-Saxon; the so-called Visigothic, which had been devised in Spain; and the Beneventan, universally employed in southern Italy. Through the migrations of scholars and the interchange of manuscripts, all of these hands became known in Gaul, where the Carolingian revival of learning produced an increased demand for handsomely and legibly written books. Through this demand there eventually was developed the Carolingian minuscule, characterized by the rounded form of its letters and its general distinctness and simplicity (see Figure 3). Written in this beautiful hand and illuminated in color—the method of decoration perfected by the Irish monks—a manuscript became a treasure of art as

The  
Carolingian  
minuscule

\* The Latin reads as follows: In secundo uolens exponere quomodo duos patres potuerit habere ioseph. cuius coniunx dicta est uirgo maria. illud . . .

well as of learning. It was no wonder that, indirectly, the books of the ninth century later became the models followed by the printers of Italy, from whom our most popular type has been inherited.<sup>18</sup>

Outside the narrow field of Latin education there was no Carolingian Renaissance. Vernacular literature as yet did not exist, except in the form of heroic tales chanted by wandering minstrels. Einhard tells us that Charlemagne had these "ancient barbarian poems" put into writing; none of them, unhappily, has survived, and we may only guess that they were somewhat like the sagas preserved from a later age. As far as the fine arts were concerned, we have only one Carolingian monument of any importance. Einhard says:

He also constructed at Aix an extremely beautiful basilica, which he adorned with gold and silver, with candelabra and balustrades and doors of massive bronze. And since he could not procure elsewhere the columns and marbles necessary for his building, he had them brought from Rome and Ravenna.

Charlemagne's church is still preserved as a chapel within the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle. It is, as Einhard implies, built in the Byzantine style, but it is not imposing, being only a domed octagon some forty-seven feet across. Was not this pathetic little imitation of Roman grandeur somewhat typical of the king's whole imperial structure?

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<sup>18</sup> See below, p. 715.

## CHAPTER X

### POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION

#### I. THE NEW BARBARIAN ATTACKS

IN THE ninth century Europe was afflicted by another series of barbarian invasions. Peoples who had acquired a modicum of civilization were subjected to inroads such as their own ancestors had visited upon the Roman provinces a few centuries earlier. These new marauders, coming from the region now known as Scandinavia, were of the Germanic stock that had long inhabited the shores of the Baltic. According to their respective places of origin, they may be classified as Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes; but at that time the three distinct nations of today hardly existed—much less the three territorial states which are now marked on the map. To attempt more than vague national distinctions among the northern pirates of the ninth century is not worth the effort. It will be simpler, as well as more accurate, normally to refer to them all as vikings—the name by which the sea-raiders called themselves, meaning creek-men, or men of the *fjords*. The vikings

The Germans who had earlier terrorized Europe had been drawn into the Roman Empire and had there developed inland states. Even the Anglo-Saxons, on settling in Britain, had largely abandoned seafaring for agriculture. The Scandinavian peoples, on the contrary, were allowed no choice. The Swedes and Norwegians were virtually surrounded by water, and the Danes were cut off from the continent by the frontier of Charlemagne's empire. To reach the outside world, the northerners had to take to boats. Their own rocky shores could provide a scant living for only a small population; so younger sons and all discontented persons naturally turned to the sea as an avenue leading toward wealth and adventure. What the southern steppes were to the nomad the rivers and inlets of the north became to the viking. Although Scandinavians had occasionally appeared as freebooters at an earlier time, it was not until the ninth century that their raids became a source of terror throughout the Christian northwest. The fundamental cause of the outpouring was overpopulation, but there were contributory factors. The advancing authority of various local kings undoubtedly added to the dissatisfaction of ad-

venturous spirits and drove them to find an outlet for their energies abroad. And the defenseless condition of the neighboring countries, quickly advertised by the success of preliminary expeditions, encouraged a growing stream of invaders.

Character  
and  
customs

For the character and activities of the vikings we are dependent upon the contemporary accounts of Christian chroniclers, eked out by the northern sagas.<sup>1</sup> But the latter, being written down at a much later time, give traditional stories in poetic form and must be used with great caution. To draw a complete picture of the primitive vikings in their homeland is out of the question; only a few of the more certain facts need be stated in the present connection. The vikings were still heathen. Although Christian missionaries appeared in the Scandinavian countries during the ninth century, the bulk of the people continued to worship Woden, Thor, and the other Germanic deities to which the Anglo-Saxons had earlier been devoted. At first the vikings showed no mercy for Christian churches or for Christian clergy. It was, in fact, the wealth of the monasteries and cathedrals that from the outset chiefly lured the northern plunderers. And along with their looting, they seemed to take a savage delight in devastation and bloodshed. Putting entire settlements to the torch, they slaughtered the inhabitants with a cold fury that spread universal horror.

The political and social organization of the vikings was that which had earlier been common to all the Germans—a dominant tribal system, supplemented by honorable associations for warlike adventure. The *comitatus* described by Tacitus reappears in the wandering band of warriors led by the Scandinavian *jarl*. As far as institutions were concerned, the invaders could contribute little that was new to the semi-barbarous nations of the west. In the material arts of civilization, as in matters of education and morals, the vikings were learners rather than teachers. In one respect only they were manifestly superior to the peoples whom they despoiled: they were beyond doubt the greatest sailors of Europe. In open boats, propelled by oars or small sails, they not only skirted the coasts of Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, but constantly made long voyages into the stormy north Atlantic, where days had to be spent beyond the sight of land. How great their accomplishments were on the sea can best be understood from an enumeration of their actual expeditions.

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<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 290.

As the Scandinavian peoples spread across the seas, geographic position naturally dictated the routes which they took. The Swedes, facing east, were attracted to the southern shore of the Baltic; the Norwegians, facing west, tended along with the Danes to attack the British Isles and the Atlantic coast of Europe. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells how, in 787, "three ships of the Northmen" landed in Wessex and there slew the king's reeve who tried to arrest them, not knowing who they were. "These," says the chronicler, "were the first ships of the Danish men that sought the land of the English." This is the oldest recorded instance of a viking expedition, but we may be sure that it was not the first. Raiders must already have appeared among the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Hebrides, and thence sailed down the shores of Britain and Ireland. In the next half-century they carried destruction to virtually every part of both islands. Iona, Lindisfarne, and dozens of other religious houses were destroyed. The kingdoms of Northumbria, East Anglia, and Kent were pillaged from end to end. The city of London was taken and sacked.

The viking  
raids

The vikings also found splendid opportunities for looting on the continent. Beginning with inroads in Frisia, they gradually pushed their fleets along the coast to Brittany, Gascony, and Spain. Utrecht, Rouen, Paris, Nantes, Saintes, Bordeaux, and Seville went up in flames. In 859 a great expedition actually rounded Gibraltar. Plundering the Mediterranean shore as far as Italy, the marauders took Pisa and Luna, thinking that the latter was Rome itself. Yet this was only a raid on a grand scale; the vikings first developed a policy of systematic conquest in regions nearer home. There the visits of the northerners became more frequent and more prolonged. Instead of leaving at the end of the summer, they would spend the winter in the invaded country. Capturing a walled city, or building a fortified camp, they would use it as headquarters for expeditions by land. To secure transportation, they would steal horses from the unfortunate inhabitants. Finally, if they remained unmolested, they would send for their families and make their occupation permanent. Sometimes the native population was subjected and forced to supply the conquerors with food; sometimes colonists were brought from the homeland and settled in regions that had been entirely devastated.

In Ireland the former plan was adopted. From a series of strongholds along the eastern coast, such as Dublin, Wexford, and

Viking  
settlement  
and  
conquest

Waterford, the vikings dominated the countryside, compelling the local peasantry to pay them tribute. In Britain, on the other hand, the Danes<sup>2</sup> not only conquered but largely recolonized wide sections of Northumbria, Mercia, and East Anglia. As centers of government they used either old Roman cities like York, Lincoln, Leicester, and Colchester, or newly erected fortresses like Nottingham, Derby, and Stamford. By the last quarter of the century they were attacking Wessex both by sea and by land. On the continent there was a similar extension of viking operations. At the mouths of the principal rivers—particularly the Rhine, Scheldt, Somme, Seine, and Loire—Danes and Norwegians founded great camps, which tended to grow into permanent settlements. From these points, advancing either by boat or on horseback, they carried destruction throughout the interior. Scarcely a city of northern and central Gaul escaped them. Amiens, Noyon, Beauvais, Orléans, Tours, Poitiers, Angoulême, Limoges, and innumerable other places were sacked and burned. It was not until the closing years of the century that the vikings were driven out of most regions and so led to concentrate their efforts in the lower Seine valley and the adjacent coasts.

Eastern Europe, too, witnessed a series of remarkable events. In 865, as we are told by Byzantine historians, Constantinople was attacked by the *Rhos*. These Russians—or Varangians, as they are sometimes called—appear from other sources to have been Swedish vikings, who had by that time secured control of the river routes connecting the Baltic and the Black Sea. Just when or how this result had been effected we cannot be certain; we may guess that it was the result of continuous raiding on the part of the northern adventurers, lured ever farther by the wealth of the orient, for which the slaves and furs of eastern Europe had long been traded. From piracy and brigandage, as usual, the transition to political conquest was easy. Novgorod and Kiev became important centers of trade and of domination over the neighboring Slavs. Thus, as will be explained in a subsequent chapter, was formed the nucleus of a great empire.

Bulgaria  
in the  
ninth  
century

Many years were to elapse before Russia emerged as a European power. In the ninth century the attention of the Slavic world was centered rather on the sudden rise of the Bulgarian monarchy. Charlemagne, by destroying the Avar dominion, had

<sup>2</sup> The Anglo-Saxons called all the Northmen Danes.

not only assured Frankish supremacy on the upper Danube, but also helped to extend Bulgarian influence in the Balkans. Originally a section of the Hunnic people, the Bulgars had by this time lost many of their primitive traits. In particular, they had tended to forget their native language and to adopt that of the Slavs with whom they had mingled for many generations. Under their own independent khan, they now built up a formidable state at the expense of their neighbors. With the weakening of the Moslem attack, the Byzantine Empire had again relapsed into a state of helplessness. In 814 the city of Constantinople was saved from Bulgarian capture rather by the death of the khan than by able defense, and in the ensuing peace the empire was forced to cede a large section of Thrace, including the upper valley of the Maritza and the city of Philippopolis. To the westward the Bulgars had already launched an ambitious offensive against the Slavs of Macedonia and Illyricum. The Serbian princes, in particular, put up a stubborn resistance, but in the end they had to yield.

The khan thus became the ruler of a powerful frontier state lying between the Frankish and Byzantine empires. It was natural that, to comport with his added dignity, he should assume the title of tsar (Cæsar) and in other ways seek recognition among civilized princes. In 870 Boris I signed a treaty with the Byzantine emperor, accepting Christianity for himself and his people under general ecclesiastical control from Constantinople. Slavic was recognized as the official language of Bulgaria and came to be written in the modified Greek alphabet devised by missionaries among the Bohemians.<sup>3</sup> Although the political force of the Byzantine Empire continued to wane, its cultural influence advanced to fresh conquests among the barbarians to the north.

For the development of Slavic Europe the conversion of the Bulgars was an event of prime importance; another was the appearance on the Danube of the Hungarians. This name the invaders received because of their affinity to the ancient Huns, but they have always called themselves Magyars. From the language which they still speak, and from the accounts of early chroniclers, it is certain that by origin the Hungarians were Asiatic nomads. Like their predecessors, the Huns and the Avars, they were apparently forced to migrate by some sort of disturbance in the homeland, and they came by the same route, sweeping across the

The  
advance  
of the  
Hungarians

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 324.



grasslands of the southeast. Closely pressed by the Petchenegs, a similar people, they crossed the Dniester and finally, in the closing years of the ninth century, occupied the plain between the Carpathians and the Danube. There the remnants of the Avar nation became amalgamated with the newcomers, so that ever since then the territory has been known as Hungary. The Magyars, according to all contemporary descriptions, were of the primitive nomad type—savage horsemen, repulsive in appearance, rapacious and pitiless. While the Frankish lands of the west were still suffering from the inroads of the vikings, those of the east were devastated by the Hungarians. Overrunning the Slavic frontier, they broke through the feeble Carolingian defenses and drove unchecked through Bavaria, Venetia, and Lombardy. In the following years they turned northward, desolating Thuringia, Saxony, and the Rhine Valley. By 925 they had even penetrated into Lorraine and Burgundy.

Arab raids  
in the  
Mediterranean

In the meantime the Arabs had continued their offensives in the Mediterranean. Holding Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, and the Balearic Islands, they could raid the coasts of Provence and Italy with impunity, and throughout the ninth and tenth centuries their attacks were virtually continuous. Ports were taken and held for years by Moslem pirates. In 846 the great church of St. Peter, outside the walls of Rome, was plundered and burned; and not long afterwards the famous monastery of Monte Cassino suffered the same fate. On the sea the Franks had no defense; on the land they seemed almost as helpless. Under repeated blows delivered from north, south, east, and west, the glorious empire of Charlemagne collapsed and disintegrated. But the barbarian attack was responsible only for the final shock; the fatal weakness of the state was inherent in its structure—a truth that clearly emerges from the unhappy story of the later Carolingians.

## 2. THE DEGRADATION OF EMPIRE AND PAPACY

The successors of  
Charlemagne

Charlemagne continued Frankish custom by dividing his dominions among his three sons; but as the two elder died prematurely, the entire inheritance fell to the survivor, Louis. The new emperor, having received an excellent education in the palace school, was sincerely devoted to the ideals of the church, and in personal morality he was a distinct improvement over his illustrious father. So his nickname of "the Pious" was not undeserved. It cannot be doubted that he conscientiously strove to

maintain the efficiency of the government and the defense of the kingdom. Louis, however, was no Charlemagne, and before his death in 840 the political situation had got completely out of hand. There were preliminary raids by the vikings; there were small frontier wars with Moors, Bretons, and Slavs; and there was an insurrection in Italy. These troubles proved to be of minor importance compared with the conflict that broke out among the emperor's own children (see Table I).

By his first wife Louis had three sons, to each of whom he early assigned a kingdom: to Lothair, as the eldest, Italy, together with the succession to the imperial crown and the general authority which it implied; to Pepin Aquitaine, with the rest of southern Gaul; and to Louis Bavaria, with command over the eastern frontier. Then the emperor's second wife presented him with a fourth son, Charles, for whose benefit he created a new principality. The consequence was a revolt of the elder brothers, joined through selfish interest by many of the imperial magnates. Mutual jealousy soon broke up the coalition and Louis regained his authority. But the death of Pepin in 838 again occasioned a reapportionment of territories, followed by further disturbances which continued until the emperor himself died in 840. That event brought Lothair to the imperial throne, and to check his assertion of supreme power, his younger brothers at once made common cause against him. The alliance led to the famous Strasbourg oaths, preserved for us by the contemporary historian, Nithard. He tells us how Louis (the German) first swore unflinching loyalty to Charles (the Bald), using the *lingua romana* so that his brother's retainers could understand him; and how Charles then followed, speaking in the *lingua teudesca*.<sup>4</sup> Through the written forms thus preserved, we know how Romance and German were spoken in the ninth century.

More important from the political viewpoint was the final settlement forced upon Lothair in 843. This was the Peace of Verdun, which, though only an arbitrary allotment of lands, chanced to have permanent results. The territory of Charles the Bald, now installed as king in Gaul, was extended eastward to an irregular line running from the Scheldt to the upper Moselle and thence to the Saône and the Rhone. The eastern kingdom of Louis the German was brought over to the Rhine, excluding Frisia

The Peace  
of Verdun  
(843)

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 213. *Teudesca* is, of course, *deutsch*, German.

on the north. So Lothair, the emperor, was left with the kingdom of Italy, plus Provence, Burgundy, Alsace, the western Rhineland, and the Low Countries. The fact that such a straggling territory, devoid of all cohesion, was thought a fit portion for the eldest son proves the absence of political foresight in the Peace of Verdun. Whatever solidarity was possessed by the other sections was purely accidental; nationalism played absolutely no part in the politics of the ninth century. Nevertheless, the Strasbourg



oaths make it clear that Charles's dominions were mainly Romance-speaking and those of Louis German-speaking. The former kingdom was to become known as France, the latter as Germany; and these two have fought over Lothair's middle strip down to our own century!

The Carolingian kingdoms (843-77)

From time to time the royal brothers indulged in fine talk about imperial unity and Christian cooperation, but their acts continuously belied their words. While their subjects were being slaughtered by heathen marauders and Moslem pirates, they presented a most unedifying example of selfishness, cruelty, and bad faith. It was only during intervals between dynastic quarrels that their attention was given to the defense of the country. There is surprisingly little to record for any of these Carolingians aside from

their efforts to gain territory at one another's expense. From the outset the emperor Lothair had been placed on the defensive by his younger brothers, and the most that he could do was to assure the inheritance of his dominions to his three sons. Dying in .855, he left to the eldest, Louis, the kingdom of Italy, together with the imperial title; to Charles a kingdom of Provence, centered in the ancient city of Arles; and to Lothair what was left, a non-descript territory that could only be named after its ruler—*Lotharii Regnum*, Lotharingia or Lorraine.

None of these little kings performed any noteworthy deeds; they are mentioned here only because their reigns mark a second step in the disintegration of the empire. Their respective kingdoms, though soon combined with larger units, tended to remain distinct and eventually to re-emerge as independent states. The princes were short-lived, and momentarily the chief gainer was Charles the Bald. In 870, it is true, he was forced to share Provence and Lorraine with Louis the German, but in 875 Charles took possession of Italy and had himself crowned emperor by the pope. Louis was prevented from interference by his death in the following year, and before Charles could profit by that sad event, he too died, in 877. By that time the situation in his original kingdom was truly desperate.

It was during the latter half of the century that the vikings, while extending their raids in all directions, began also to develop ambitious plans of conquest. To check them, Charles the Bald occasionally undertook great campaigns; yet somehow he was always prevented from attaining noteworthy results. For one thing, he was constantly being diverted by projects of territorial aggrandizement to the eastward, which led his brother Louis to encourage sedition behind his back. Taking advantage of the general confusion, the Bretons forced the recognition of their duke as king. Aquitaine already had its own king, first a nephew of Charles and then his son. One proved as disloyal as the other. Charles, indeed, found it increasingly difficult to enforce his authority over any of his officials. His reign ended with the central government in a state of paralysis.

The weakening of the monarchy

As noted in a preceding chapter, the efficiency of Charlemagne's administration had depended on his control of the counts. In this respect his success was due in part to his appointment of *missi*, but more especially to his own tireless energy. His successors were not men of extraordinary energy and the conditions

throughout their realm became steadily worse. Even if they had been better rulers than they were, they would have been confronted by an impossible task. So vast a territory, provided with no adequate system of communications, could not be defended as a whole. Even the fragments into which it was broken in 843 proved too large. The Carolingians had no true machinery of government—no hierarchy of trained officials to whom the imperial service was a profession. Instead there were a series of semi-barbarous commanders, styled counts, marquises, and dukes. Receiving no pay from the central government, they were dependent for their income on their own estates, plus a share of what they collected in the king's name. The attitude of such an official toward public affairs was that of a great landlord. He inevitably identified himself with the local aristocracy.

By the ninth century the rule had been established that counts had to be vassals of the king; but neither oath nor ceremonial could keep them faithful to a master whose interests ran counter to their own. Since the days of Charlemagne great offices had regularly come to descend from father to son, and this hereditary system was confirmed by Charles the Bald. The king's administration thus depended on men who were constantly led to make themselves autonomous. The dukes and marquises to whom Charles intrusted the defense of strategic positions tended, by their own success, to become freed of all constraint from above. Even the prelates of the church, being regularly endowed with political authority, fell into the habit of acting to suit themselves. Yet before we condemn this class of great officeholders for wrecking the kingdom, we must remember that it was they who gave the people of the countryside whatever real protection was enjoyed. The hope of society in the west was not the Carolingian monarchy, but the local dictators whom we know as the feudal nobility.

Charles  
the Fat  
(d. 888)

By 877, when Charles the Bald died, the empire was in chaos, and yet the situation became worse. Charles was succeeded in the west by a son who reigned for only two years, and then by two grandsons, the survivor of whom died in 884. Thereupon the magnates decided to call in the son of Louis the German, Charles the Fat, who had earlier acquired Italy and the imperial crown. Momentarily one man again held the entire Carolingian Empire, but the restoration proved a dismal failure. In 885, while the emperor was in Italy, the vikings once more advanced

up the Seine and laid siege to Paris, then merely the island called the Cité, which was encircled by an old Roman wall. Under the able command of the count, Odo or Eude, the citizens put up a heroic defense for several months while frantic appeals were sent to Charles for relief. At last, after a very leisurely march, he appeared to the north of the city with a large army; then, to the disgust of his subjects, he refused to fight. Instead, he paid the vikings to raise the siege and permitted them to winter in Burgundy—the equivalent of abandoning the province to devastation. In the next year (887) Charles was dethroned and shortly afterwards he died.

The deposition of Charles the Fat marked the end of Charlemagne's empire. Despite the titles held by later kings, it was henceforth as dead as that of Constantine. In place of it now appeared a series of states which were never to be united until Napoleon Bonaparte revived the Carolingian tradition. Nor did the old dynasty long survive the events of 887. In the western kingdom the great nobles proclaimed Odo, the valiant count of Paris; in the eastern kingdom the crown was given to Arnulf, the ex-emperor's nephew who, though of illegitimate birth, was known to be a good fighter. In Italy the royal title was borne at the same time by two local princes, and the fact that one of them also got himself made emperor only served to prolong the civil war. The crown of Arles had meanwhile been assumed by the local duke, and to the north of Provence a new kingdom of Burgundy was created by another upstart. In Lorraine a son of Arnulf was installed as king toward the end of the century. Even this was not the limit of disintegration, for many duchies had now become independent in all but name.

Since, according to the Carolingian ideal, church and state were merely two phases of one imperial administration, it was inevitable that both should be affected by the calamities of the ninth century. Down to the time of Charles the Bald learning and literature continued to flourish at the Frankish courts. Hrabanus Maurus lived until 856 and he was survived by a number of distinguished authors. Controversy over predestination and the sacrament of the eucharist produced some remarkable books by Gottschalk, Radbertus, and Ratramnus; John the Scot composed his philosophical works; Nithard wrote a very superior chronicle. In the following years, however, hardly a monastery or cathedral escaped destruction by the vikings. Ireland reverted to barbarism.

The ruin  
of Caro-  
lingian  
culture

In Britain Northumbrian culture was wiped out by the Danish conquest. In Italy the most famous centers of education were looted by the Saracens. And to complete the ruin, the Hungarians soon appeared in Germany. By the opening of the tenth century, the little that remained of Latin culture was threatened with extinction. At the same time the papacy, after a short period of brilliant leadership, sank so low as to forfeit any claim to the respect of Christendom.

Hincmar,  
archbishop  
of Reims

Louis the Pious, like his father, was constantly surrounded by great prelates, who not only governed matters of education and worship but also acted as political advisers. To his bishops, indeed, Louis tended to be distinctly submissive, humbling himself before their discipline on more than one memorable occasion. Under Charles the Bald the inspiring tradition of St. Ambrose was further strengthened by the career of the famous Hincmar, archbishop of Reims. Though the author of influential books on theology, Hincmar was even more prominent as a statesman. To the king the archbishop delivered many lectures on the superiority of the church, reminding him that he owed his office to consecration by the clergy and that he, like all men, was subject to ecclesiastical correction for his sins. The force of this argument was admirably shown in the divorce case of Lothair II, king of Lorraine. Since the wife whom he had taken on his father's urging had borne him no children, Lothair decided to be rid of her and to marry another woman with whom he had long been infatuated. And since marriage was held to be an indissoluble sacrament of the church, he persuaded a council of local bishops, on the basis of trumped-up charges, to declare the wedding invalid.<sup>5</sup> Hincmar at once denounced the proceedings as immoral and unlawful, while the aggrieved wife appealed to Pope Nicholas I.

Pope  
Nicholas I  
(858-67)

The latter, elected in 858, was the ablest man to hold the see of St. Peter in many generations. Nicholas quashed the judgment already made, forced Lothair to take back the repudiated lady, and dictated settlements of various related questions. Before the affair was terminated, he had overruled the decisions of several Frankish councils, deposed various bishops without consulting their associates, and issued orders to almost every member of the imperial family. At the same time Nicholas fear-

<sup>5</sup> All the divorces of the Middle Ages were annulments of marriage; often they were made on legal technicalities.

lessly plunged into controversy with the Byzantine emperor by coming to the support of a deposed patriarch at Constantinople. As the eastern government had earlier abandoned the iconoclastic reform,<sup>6</sup> its relations with Rome had again become friendly. Now, when the emperor refused to submit in the matter of the patriarch, he and all his supporters were placed under papal excommunication. This affair once more produced open conflict between the Greek and Latin churches, and so helped to bring about the final schism two centuries later.

Although Nicholas and Hincmar had stood together on the subject of the royal divorce, they were brought into violent disagreement by the papal assertion of immediate power over the local clergy. The archbishop, having laid accusations against the bishop of Soissons, had him removed from his see by a provincial synod, in spite of the fact that in the meantime he had appealed to Rome. Nicholas at once ordered the reinstatement of the accused pending judgment of the papal court, before which Hincmar was commanded to justify his action. The archbishop delayed and attempted evasion, but in the end he was compelled to submit. Despite opposition from the foremost prelate of Gaul, the pope thus enforced his right to exercise direct jurisdiction over any ecclesiastic, low or high. In this connection should be mentioned a very famous forgery known as the False Decretals. The author was apparently a Frankish priest whose primary interest was to safeguard the privileges of the local clergy by invoking the pope as sovereign protector. In the original collection the oldest decretals dated only from the pontificate of Siricius.<sup>7</sup> So the zealous advocate of justice fabricated a series of appropriate documents to cover the earlier centuries. Nicholas I, in all honesty, accepted the new compilation and the forgeries escaped detection for almost five hundred years. Since they merely confirmed principles already enunciated by the papacy, the work as a whole cannot be held to have changed the course of history. The matter of chief significance to us is the mentality of the pious forger.

Nicholas died prematurely in 867, and two centuries were to elapse before Roman bishops should again express their ideals in such plain words. Meanwhile the church, like the Carolingian Empire, threatened to disintegrate. As the result of the develop-

The papal  
decline

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 180; below, pp. 323 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 85.



ment already noted, the papal office had become very complex. Like other bishops, the pope held a particular see and administered its estates as a private landlord. Since the time of Pepin I, he had also been the sovereign of a territorial principality—the Papal States, which included the duchy of Rome and the exarchate of Ravenna. Finally, he claimed to be head of the universal church and was recognized as such at least in the west. Of these functions it was the last that made the papacy a great European institution, for without it the pope could be no more than the holder of a petty Italian state built round a bishopric. After Nicholas I the popes had the misfortune, through their position as temporal rulers, of gradually becoming immersed in local politics and so of losing their spiritual leadership of Europe.

Italy in  
the ninth  
century

Even before the deposition of Charles the Fat, Italy had utterly lacked political unity. Neither as kings nor as emperors had the later Carolingians exercised more than local authority in the peninsula. The old Lombard duchies, though placed in the hands of Franks, had not lost their traditional claims to autonomy. Hereditary principalities, such as those of Friuli, Tuscany, and Spoleto, constantly gained strength at the expense of the monarchy. Over them, as over the Papal States, the king's control in the later ninth century was already nominal, and to the south it had never been recognized. The Lombard duchy of Benevento had broken into several fragments, the rulers of which were engaged in chronic war with one another, with the Greeks who were supposed to be deputies of the Byzantine emperor, and with Saracen adventurers from Sicily and Africa. The popes, in the midst of unscrupulous enemies and deprived of imperial protection, became preoccupied with matters of territorial defense and so, little by little, were led into dependence on very unworthy patrons.

As may readily be imagined, the chaos in Italy increased after the deposition of Charles the Fat. A civil war over the royal title between Berengar of Friuli and Guy of Spoleto was temporarily won by the latter, who used his advantage to obtain the imperial crown for himself and for his son Lambert. Meanwhile a certain Formosus had secured the see of St. Peter, and he called in the German Arnulf to be emperor instead. Arnulf went home, Formosus died, civil war broke out again, and eventually Lambert found a new and complaisant pope in Stephen VII. He, according to the horrible story of a contemporary, had the body of

Formosus dragged from the grave, dressed in pontifical robes, and formally brought to trial. Having been declared guilty of various crimes, the dead pope was stripped of his official insignia and turned over to a city mob to be thrown into the Tiber. Then came another political reversal. By the end of the century Stephen had been strangled, Lambert had been supplanted by his old rival, and a new series of feuds had developed.

All this was bad enough; yet worse came in the tenth century. The kingdom of Italy ceased to be more than a fiction and the imperial title went begging. The local princes became involved in a maze of war and murderous intrigue that defies narration. The popes, like the later Merovingians, tended to be puppets in the hands of political bosses. A Roman nobleman named Theophylact and the members of his family presented Europe with the shameful spectacle of an exploited papacy held by weaklings and debauchees. Marozia, daughter of Theophylact, was known as the mistress of Pope Sergius III and, presumably by him, had a son whom she later made Pope John XI. Finally, the depth of papal infamy was reached under a grandson of the same lady, the notorious John XII, whose vicious life became a public scandal. Under such leadership, what could be expected of the ordinary clergy?

Italy in  
the tenth  
century

### 3. THE EMERGENCE OF NEW POLITICAL UNITS

The viking and Hungarian invasions, as their immediate result, spread ruin throughout the Christian west, shattering old political structures and threatening to undo the civilizing work of the church during the whole previous century. Subsequently these invasions led to the establishment in various regions of new barbarian settlements, some of which were to become centers of great activity in the succeeding age. As the first stage of desolation and pillage was followed by one of social readjustment, a flourishing trade developed along new northern routes, with momentous consequences for the future of the world. But the result to which we must give our attention for the moment was the organization, as a matter of sheer necessity, of new political units, characterized rather by military efficiency than by regard for legal tradition. The ninth and tenth centuries saw the obscure beginnings of great states and illustrious dynasties that were to dominate Europe for many generations to come.

The results  
of the new  
barbarian  
invasions

At the time of the first viking inroads the British Isles, despite

Alfred,  
king of  
Wessex  
(871-901)

the triumph of Christianity, seemed as far from political unity as they had been three hundred years before. Ireland was the scene of chronic warfare among its rival clans, and similar conditions prevailed throughout the west and north of Britain, where Welsh, Scots, and Picts had long been fighting one another as well as the encroaching Saxons from the east. Among the states of the latter the foremost in civilization was Northumbria, but the kings of that country had yielded to the overlordship first of the Mercians and then of the West Saxons. Yet even Wessex, though reputed the strongest military power of ninth-century Britain, had little real authority beyond its own proper frontiers. There was no kingdom to set up an effective defense of Britain either by land or by sea.

It is easy to see how, under these conditions, the Danes were encouraged to attempt the conquest of the English country. In the second half of the ninth century, as already noted, they rapidly gained undisputed possession of a wide territory on the east coast, and from there, acting in concert with bands from their other settlements in Ireland and Galloway, threatened Wessex from all sides. Then, in 871, the throne of that little kingdom was inherited by Alfred, in whom the invaders encountered an opponent of remarkable ability and determination. Adopting the Danes' own tactics, he organized a system of defense based on a continuous series of fortified camps, or boroughs,<sup>8</sup> permanently garrisoned by forces drawn from the neighborhood; and at the same time he built a fleet to use in connection with a mobile army in the field. The outcome, after many reverses, was a complete victory. The Danish king of East Anglia, Guthrum, was forced to sign peace, accepting Christianity for himself and his followers and recognizing as Alfred's all lands to the southwest of a line drawn between Chester and the mouth of the Thames.

The  
formation  
of the  
kingdom  
of England

Although Alfred was still only king of Wessex, his kingdom had thus been enlarged in two directions. To the southeast had been incorporated all such little states as Kent and Sussex. To the north had been added about half of Mercia, which remained under a member of its royal house, the alderman Æthelred, married to Alfred's daughter Æthelfleda. It was this remarkable lady of the Mercians who, after the death of Alfred, joined her brother, Edward the Elder, in a great offensive against the Danes.

<sup>8</sup> See below, p. 347.

From the first they were aided by the fact that the Danelaw<sup>9</sup> was ruled by rival princes who failed to take advantage of their combined strength. The English, consequently, were able to take the country bit by bit; and as it was occupied, it was organized into districts centering in boroughs—an arrangement still reflected by the map of the midland counties. Some of these boroughs were old Roman cities; others were constructions of the combatants in the war. As permanent fortresses, they now became units of military defense and of civil government, and so they remained for a long time to come.

Before his death in 925 Edward had thus conquered and reorganized the southern Danelaw. His successful advance was continued by his son and successor, Æthelstan, who annexed the territory north of the Humber and assured the permanence of the conquest by his famous victory at Brunanburh. By the middle of the tenth century the West Saxon dynasty had united under its dominion all the old English territory, and this new kingdom, so much broader and stronger than the original Wessex, naturally came to be known as England. It did not, of course, include all Britain. On the west the peninsula of Wales remained entirely independent, and beyond the English holdings about Chester the Welsh and the Danes continued their warfare without much interference from the south. To offset the viking danger, the Scots and Picts had meanwhile combined to form one state, which eventually, under the name of Scotland, came to include the whole of northern Britain.

The kingdom of England thus came into existence through the union of little territories. On the other hand, the corresponding states across the Channel—such as Flanders, Normandy, Burgundy, and Aquitaine—were formed by the disintegration of larger monarchies. The reason for the contrast was obviously that, by the test of actual conflict, the old Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were too small to survive, whereas those of the continent were too large. Throughout the Carolingian Empire it was the organization of duchies that marked a political advance beyond a condition of chronic anarchy. Under Charlemagne the rule was that counts should be directly subordinated to the royal authority. On the great military frontiers, however, he established larger units under officials who were properly called marquises but who

Political  
develop-  
ment  
on the  
continent

<sup>9</sup> The lands subjected by the Danes, including most of Northumbria, East Anglia, and Mercia. See map on p. 236.

sometimes became known as dukes. Later, with the advent of the vikings, new marches were created for the defense of exposed regions and intrusted to men of proved ability in war.

The marches of Neustria, Flanders, and Burgundy Charles the Bald, for example, appointed an adventurer of obscure origin named Robert the Strong as "duke between the Seine and the Loire"—supreme commander over what may be called the march of Neustria. Robert, in the course of his struggle with the vikings, gave the county of Paris to his son Odo, with consequences that have already been mentioned. In the meantime Charles had created two other frontier districts, Flanders and Burgundy. The former, consisting of certain counties on the lower Scheldt, he conferred on a man much like Robert the Strong, one Baldwin Iron-Arm, who had just gained the king's pardon for having eloped with his daughter. Baldwin was the first of a great line of fighters and adventurers, most of whom were also named Baldwin. Under them the original march on the North Sea was rapidly extended by the acquisition of other counties and solidly organized into a remarkably efficient state, of which much will be heard in the following centuries. The French duchy of Burgundy began in the same way—as a defense for Charles the Bald's eastern frontier placed under Richard, count of Autun. An able and unscrupulous prince, he took advantage of the growing confusion to increase his power in all directions, and so passed on a formidable aggregation of territories to his son. The latter, married to a granddaughter of Robert the Strong, was eventually to secure the royal throne (see Table II).

The southern French duchies By this time, too, southern Gaul had fallen into the hands of various great officials. Aquitaine, after being recognized as a sub-kingdom for about a hundred years, reverted to the status of a duchy and became even more independent than before. Toward the Pyrenees the Gascons<sup>10</sup> continued to form a separate state under their own duke. On the Mediterranean there were two important principalities: Catalonia (the old Spanish March), acquired by the count of Barcelona, and the march of Gothia (the old Septimania), acquired by the count of Toulouse. On the extreme west Brittany still remained a foreign kingdom, while Normandy was taking form under its viking conquerors. On the extreme east a series of little kingdoms—themselves hardly

<sup>10</sup> The Gascons, as the name implies, were of Basque descent, but they were Romance-speaking.

more than duchies—pushed the French frontier back to the line of 843.

The rise of these dukes and marquises naturally involved the weakening of the monarchy—a process which the individual kings found themselves powerless to check. The maintenance of an efficient central government had proved impossible, and the only escape from utter chaos lay in the organization of local units that could actually defend the countryside. The great principalities of mediæval France were the inevitable products of the emergency that confronted society in the later ninth century. Thenceforth, for a long time to come, it was the lieutenants of the king who held all royal power within their respective territories. It was they who, like the West Saxon kings in Britain, fought off the invaders and devised improved systems of administration. It was they who rendered justice, laid taxes, raised armies, and constructed fortresses. For this latter purpose the walls of old Roman camps and cities were now repaired; but alongside them arose many new strongholds, which we know as castles,<sup>11</sup> and which the German-speaking peoples called *burgen*. As yet the castle was very simple—a defensible position surrounded by an earthen rampart, a wooden palisade, and a moat. Inside would be placed barracks, storehouses, stables, a well, a church, and perhaps a wooden tower as headquarters for the commander. Such castles were at first primarily places of refuge and defense for the surrounding population; then, with the passage of time, they tended to become feudal strongholds, held by a lord's professional troops and used as permanent centers of government—or, perhaps, of oppression.

In the course of these developments the fate of the western monarchy remained in doubt. In 888, as we have seen, the magnates of the west gave the royal title to one of their own number, Odo, count of Paris and marquis of Neustria. Theoretically he became the heir of the Carolingian authority. Actually he was merely the leader of the princely group, and from the outset he was opposed by Charles the Simple, grandson of Charles the Bald. Earlier he had been too young to assume a political rôle. Now, as a youth entering his teens, he was called on to accept the crown and head a revolt against the Parisian. After five years of civil war in which Charles had failed to make any headway, Odo fell

Odo of  
Paris and  
Charles  
the Simple

<sup>11</sup> Latin *castellum*, French *château*; see above, p. 8. Cf. the English *burgh* or borough and the *burgen* of Henry the Fowler in Germany.

sick and died, urging his retainers for the sake of unity to support the Carolingian. Charles then reigned undisturbed, and not without success, for almost twenty-five years.

The duchy of Normandy (911) During this period the most important event was the recognition by the king, in 911, of the Norman duchy. The vikings, having been driven out of their other positions on the coast, had constantly appeared in greater force on the lower Seine. Charles wisely decided to make the most of a situation which he was powerless to change, and so by solemn treaty recognized the viking chief, Hrolf, as duke of the country which has since been known as Normandy. The duke, on his side, became the vassal of the king, promising to accept Christianity and to keep his followers within stated bounds. Thus was legally proclaimed a new principality which rapidly became an integral part of feudal France. In spite of all fresh colonization from the homeland, the Normans quickly adapted themselves to their foreign environment and made its language and customs their own. Before the end of the next century they were to lead the advance of the French into Britain, Spain, Italy, and even Palestine.

The final victory of the Parisian house (987) Charles the Simple, however, was less interested in Normandy than in Lorraine, which he finally conquered after the death of the last Carolingian in the east. Thereby he aroused the resentment not only of the German king, but also of the western nobles, who accused him of neglecting them for the sake of favorites from the Rhinelands. The result was another civil war, in the course of which Charles died a prisoner and the crown was worn by two relatives of Odo (see Tables I, II). Then, from 936 to 987, the throne was again held by Carolingians, but they were overshadowed by the Parisian, Hugh the Great. Combining the two marquisates of Neustria and Burgundy, he dominated a wide belt of territory extending from Normandy to the eastern frontier of the kingdom. Although he never was king, his son Hugh Capet was elected in 987. A century of rivalry between the Carolingian and Parisian houses ended in what proved to be the definitive triumph of the latter. The glorious Capetian dynasty, which was to reign until the tragic year 1792, can thus be traced back to Robert the Strong, soldier of fortune under Charles the Bald.

In Germany the Carolingians disappeared earlier than in France. Arnulf, succeeding Charles the Fat, began his reign brilliantly by crushing the vikings on the Dyle in 891—a defeat that ended their long domination in Frisia. But Lorraine, or-

ganized as a sub-kingdom, was a source of chronic trouble, and in the opposite direction Arnulf was forced to lead an army against the Slavs of Moravia. Then, just as the Hungarians appeared on this frontier, he was diverted to Italy, where he was eventually crowned emperor in 896—a vain honor which he lived to enjoy for only three years. Arnulf's son, Louis the Child, was proclaimed at six and died at eighteen, leaving a kingdom overrun by the Hungarians and, like France, devoid of an efficient central government. There, too, each region had to provide its own defense as best it might, and the inevitable result was sectional leadership under great local families.

The last  
Caro-  
lingians  
in  
Germany  
(888-911)

About the middle of the ninth century Louis the German named as margrave on the eastern frontier of Saxony a certain Liudolf, and he, through successful wars against the Slavs and the vikings, gradually extended his control over most of the Saxon territory. His office passed in turn to two sons, the second of whom, Otto, secured recognition as duke of Saxony and also added Thuringia to the family possessions. His son was the famous Henry the Fowler, later given the royal crown. Similar events took place in Bavaria. That country, the administrative center of the German kingdom under the later Carolingians, was overwhelmed by the Hungarians in the days of Louis the Child. Meanwhile the march of Carinthia had been secured by a local count named Liutpold. He was killed in battle with the invaders, but his son Arnulf carried on the war, and in 911 he was hailed as duke of all the Bavarians. The third of the great German duchies to emerge was Suabia, previously referred to as Alamania. Here the ducal title was assumed in 917 by Burkhard, margrave of Rhætia, who was formally recognized by the king two years later. Between Suabia and Saxony, along the valley of the Main, lay the old Frankish territory that had at one time been included within the kingdom of Austrasia—known in German as Franken, in English as Franconia. In the earlier tenth century it was not united under a single prince, but was the scene of a bitter struggle for supremacy between two rival families of counts: one established in the western region of Hesse and the other in the eastern region about Bamberg. In 911 the chief of the former house, Conrad, was elected king by the German magnates and he naturally used his authority to assure the duchy of Franconia to his brother.

The great  
German  
duchies

Conrad, the first of the non-Carolingian kings of Germany,



Conrad I  
(911-18)

reigned for only seven years and during that time was able to accomplish little. While the Hungarians were extending their depredations on all sides, the royal authority was set at naught by rebellions in Saxony, Bavaria, and Suabia, where local dukes had now solidly intrenched themselves. And to the west, as has been noted, Charles the Simple took advantage of the situation to annex Lorraine. By 918, when Conrad died, it was evident that, if the German monarchy were to survive, a stronger king was needed. So, following Conrad's own nomination, the nobles proclaimed the Saxon duke, Henry the Fowler. The new sovereign wisely made no attempt to destroy the rival duchies, but merely forced Arnulf of Bavaria and Burkhard of Suabia to recognize his superior authority. He was then able, thanks to the civil war in France, to recover Lorraine, where the local duke saved himself by changing sides. When all was said and done, however, Henry's actual power was slight outside his own territories of Saxony and Thuringia; it was there that he carried out the work for which he remains chiefly famous.

Henry the  
Fowler  
(919-36)

To meet the pressing danger of the Hungarians, Henry built a series of fortresses (*burgen*) along the valleys of the Elbe and the Weser, and he reorganized his field army, considerably extending the use of cavalry. His reward came with the battle on the Unstrut in 933, where the Magyar horde suffered its first great defeat. On his death three years later, he was succeeded by his illustrious son, Otto I, who completed Henry's work by permanently freeing Germany of the Hungarian menace. The accomplishments of the great Otto will be more adequately treated in a separate chapter. Here it need only be remarked that the new dynasty of Germany, like those of France and England, was an indirect product of the ninth-century invasions.

## CHAPTER XI

### FEUDAL SOCIETY

#### I. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS

IN THE foregoing pages a number of feudal institutions have been encountered, but no systematic account has been given of feudalism as a whole. On this subject many books have presented many different views, mainly because the authors have not always dealt with precisely the same facts. The term feudalism may be applied to all sorts of customs that varied greatly from one locality to another, and from one time to another. According to the way in which it is defined, it may or may not be held to include certain particular phases of mediæval life. In the present chapter attention will be centered on the social conditions which actually prevailed throughout the French kingdom in the eleventh century, and which may be called feudal because feudalism was then the dominant institution.

The  
agrarian  
basis

The economic basis of this feudal society was agriculture. The tendency in western Europe for seven hundred years had been toward a more thoroughly agrarian organization, thus bringing the population into two sharply distinguished classes: an aristocracy of landowners and a peasantry of cultivators. The typical member of the latter class held an allotment of soil and in return owed labor service and rents in kind. So the great estate could be administered for an indefinite period with only exceptional recourse to payments in cash. At the same time the practice became increasingly general for kings and princes to reward their official and noble retainers with grants of land instead of salaries in money. Especially under the Merovingians, members of the aristocracy often obtained benefices<sup>1</sup> from wealthy patrons—lands held in return for some sort of honorable service. When, like most other sources of income, the benefice became a hereditary possession, it was regularly called a fief, Latin *feudum*, from which is derived the word feudal. Accordingly, the feudal class proper included merely the grantors and holders of fiefs. By feudalism, in strict usage, is meant only the customs directly pertaining to fiefs.

The fief

<sup>1</sup> On this and other Merovingian institutions, see above, pp. 199 f.

These customs, however, were not exclusively of an economic character. The typical fief of the Middle Ages was more than a collection of agrarian estates. It was also a unit of territorial government; for, aside from his rights as landlord, the holder exercised certain political authority over the inhabitants. This result had come about through the interaction of various factors. One was the Merovingian immunity—the exemption of a certain domain from the jurisdiction of the count. The beneficiary thereupon became, within his limited sphere, virtually a count in his own name, levying taxes, exacting military service, raising fortifications, and administering justice. These same powers were of course maintained by the counts themselves, as well as by the greater dignitaries styled marquises and dukes. In France such offices became hereditary fiefs by the end of the ninth century, and within another hundred years the king's superior authority, though still recognized in theory, had actually disappeared.

The feudal  
state

The culmination of this monarchical decay was a maze of feudal boundaries that utterly defy any attempt at rational explanation, for they were the product not of systematic planning, but of circumstance. In many cases the rights of a lord could be traced back to some delegation of authority from the king; in many others the title ultimately rested on nothing more than sheer usurpation. The later Carolingian age was one in which men generally followed<sup>2</sup>

The good old rule, . . . the simple plan,  
That they should take who have the power,  
And they should keep who can.

Under such conditions the effective power of a feudal noble depended, first, on the control to which he was subjected from above and, secondly, on that which he could enforce over his subordinates. Each territory had its own custom; to understand its feudal organization, it must be studied individually.

The simplest case was that of the lesser noble whose political authority did not reach beyond the territory which he actually possessed. There he enforced justice in minor cases, collected tolls and other local taxes, and through the services of his peasants maintained bridges, roads, and the defenses of the country. But on these same lands his lord, or perhaps his lord's lord, might claim the right to try all more serious crimes and to enjoy other

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<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth, *Rob Roy's Grave*.

extraordinary privileges. The power of a great feudal prince extended not merely over his own properties, but in some respects over those of his vassals and over those of churches under his special protection. The duke of Normandy, for example, enjoyed a monopoly throughout his duchy of certain types of justice, of all warfare, and of nomination to important ecclesiastical offices. He ruled his state through viscounts placed in charge of castles, which he regarded as ducal fortresses. His fief, therefore, was virtually a sub-kingdom. The marquis of Flanders, though commonly bearing the plain title of count, was another powerful ruler, exercising all royal rights within his principality. Some of the great princes, however, were relatively weak because they were unable to assert any effective control over the numerous counts, viscounts, and other petty nobles who held of them.

A fact often lost sight of is that the fief was primarily an office rather than a piece of land. In the case of a duke or count the distinction is clear. What was held was essentially a right of government within a particular region, and the accompanying estates served merely to provide a livelihood for the holder. A great officer of the household, such as a chamberlain or a seneschal, might be endowed in the same way—provided with lands in return for his special duties at court. Even the small feudal tenant is found, on analysis, to have owed his privileged status to a similar consideration. By furnishing a few knights he was performing a political service. The acres from which he gained his subsistence were his pay. Further evidence of this principle is found in the institution of primogeniture. Land could be partitioned; an office could not be without destroying its value. So, when a principality was inherited, it passed entire to the eldest son. The same rule, for the same reason, came to be applied to all fiefs.

Primo-  
geniture

Originally, as we have seen, the holding of benefices had no connection with the institution of personal lordship; either could exist without the other. By the tenth century, however, the two had become intimately associated. If one man held a fief from another, the former was necessarily the vassal of the latter. Any vassal, in order to perform the mounted service that was normally required of him, had to be given a fief—that is to say, landed estates, together with whatever buildings, materials, tools, animals and cultivators were needed to provide an adequate income. This point is all-important. As far as feudalism was con-

Vassalage

cerned, the peasant was merely property—a necessary and valuable appurtenance to the soil, like a plow or an ox. He was not himself a party to the feudal contract. The vassal, on the other hand, was a gentleman who regarded labor as degrading. To be a vassal was a mark of distinction. Vassalage was the equivalent of gentility. And since the vassal of one lord might himself be the lord of a third man, neither term marked a separate class. Most lords were also vassals, and many vassals were also lords; together they constituted the feudal aristocracy.

Homage The bond between lord and vassal was established by the ceremony of homage.<sup>3</sup> On inheriting or on being granted a fief, B presented himself before A, his prospective lord, who would be seated in state. B knelt, placing his two hands between those of A, acknowledged himself A's man, and promised him fealty. A then raised B to his feet and kissed his cheeks, formally accepting his homage and recognizing him as vassal. Thenceforth the pair were supposed to be bound to each other by a lifelong tie of mutual loyalty and support—a relationship which early feudal literature portrays as in the highest degree sacred and honorable.<sup>4</sup> The untrue vassal was a felon, an evil name that could be thrown at a gentleman only as a deadly insult. In actual life, however, conditions were not so ideal. Disputes over land and privileges constantly arose between lords and their vassals, and in the absence of any strong superior authority produced a state of chronic warfare in many regions.

Feudal service Wherever fief-holding had not degenerated into a mere fiction, it was held to imply a contract between the two parties. From the lord the vassal received a livelihood in the form of agrarian estates, as well as a guarantee of protection and justice; in return he owed to the lord various forms of service and assistance. Very commonly the fief bore a specific obligation for mounted soldiers, or knights, in which case the vassal was said to hold by knight service. Occasionally he was bound only to furnish arms or other objects of value, or to perform some ceremony at court, and such tenures are commonly classified as serjeanty. Churches were often given lands in free alms—owing no service except prayer for the donor's soul or for those of his ancestors. But this tenure was quite exceptional; even on the part of ecclesiastics

<sup>3</sup> From the Latin *homo*, a man.

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp. 293 f.

knight service was the rule, for it provided what the average lord was most anxious to obtain—an army.

In addition the vassal owed suit to the lord's court; that is to say, he had to attend the lord whenever summoned. At irregular intervals great assemblies would be held for ceremonial purposes, and on these occasions the lord would submit to his men for their approval projects of general interest to his territory. Such times would also be appropriate for celebrating a son's knighthood or a daughter's marriage. Often, however, the court would be held for the sake of administering justice, in which connection the vassal might be called either as defendant or as a judgment-finder. The feudal court, though presided over by the lord, was supposed to render decisions according to valid custom as determined by the suitors themselves. Thus the vassal always claimed the right to judgment by his peers, his social equals. And if he were sent to trial, he still kept his gentleman's weapons, deciding the issue by judicial combat. After God had been solemnly invoked to defend the right, the two parties fought it out and the victor was held to be justified in his contention. Here again practice was by no means as perfect as theory. Disputes often arose between nobles who had no common lord, when—in the absence of a higher sovereign to enforce his control—they were only too likely to take up arms without any formality at all.

Feudal  
justice

To his lord, furthermore, the vassal owed hospitality—a very expensive obligation when the former came with a large retinue and made a protracted stay. Since even the greatest princes spent a large part of their time visiting prominent ecclesiastics and other faithful supporters, the exaction of entertainment came to be limited by written grant or changed into a money payment. If the lord incurred some extraordinary expense, the vassal was usually liable for a contribution called aid. The occasions varied from region to region; in northern France an aid was commonly due when the lord knighted a son, celebrated the wedding of a daughter, or was captured and held for ransom. In case the lord was a clergyman, the installation of a successor or the necessity of a trip to Rome provided a good excuse for seeking pecuniary assistance. The general rule always held good, however, that the vassal was not subject to arbitrary taxation: if subsidies were wanted for purposes other than those definitely recognized by custom, they could be obtained only as free-will offerings. Nor was the vassal responsible for military service oftener than once a

Feudal  
taxation

year, and then only for a fixed period—in northern France forty days.

The feudal incidents

Especially profitable to the lord were the perquisites known as the feudal incidents. Although the fief was hereditary, vassalage was not. Before an heir could lawfully possess his inheritance, he had to go to the lord and perform homage. On this occasion he normally was expected to pay what was known as a relief, a sum often equivalent to the first year's revenue of the fief. Should a vassal die leaving only children under age, the lord enjoyed the right of wardship, holding the fief in his own hands and appropriating its regular income during the period of the minority. In default of sons, a girl might inherit the fief. Then the lord controlled the lady's choice of a husband—a privilege which commonly led to the selection of the highest bidder in a sort of private auction. Finally, if there were no heirs, the fief was said to escheat to the lord, who could then grant it out again or keep it, as he chose. Forfeiture was the technical penalty for felony. It was incurred by a vassal who refused to perform his owed service; but the matter of enforcement was often difficult, and a weak lord was helpless before a strong rebel. Fiefs held by ecclesiastics, of course, produced no income from relief, wardship, marriage, or escheat; so the lord, by way of compensation, very generally took over the lands of a dead bishop or abbot and treated them as his own until a successor was elected and installed—the custom known in French as *régale*.

Subinfeudation

From infeudated lands—that is to say, lands granted as fiefs to vassals—a lord received the services and incidental revenues just enumerated. Whatever was left in his own possession was called his demesne,<sup>5</sup> and from it he received the manorial income that will be described in a following section. Each vassal in turn could subinfeudate whatever he chose to vassals of his own, or he could keep all of his estates in demesne. For example, suppose A granted to B a fief of fifty villages for the service of twelve knights. If B continued to hold all in demesne, he would have to hire eleven knights when a summons came from A, for he could serve as only one knight himself. If, on the other hand, he subinfeudated ten villages to C for five knights, eight to D for three knights, five to E for two knights, and two to F for one knight, his service could be performed without hiring anybody.

<sup>5</sup> This spelling will be used in the following pages to mark the technical word, while "domain" will be left with its ordinary meaning.

And in the meantime he would have twenty-five villages left in demesne from which to support himself and his family. C, D, E, and F would have the same choice in managing their respective affairs. One village might therefore be part of many fiefs, but eventually some landlord would hold it in demesne. Below the feudal hierarchy and supporting it by their labor were always the peasants.

The gulf between the two classes was hard to cross. Men of low birth, though not actually unfree, could rarely enter the aristocracy of fief-holders. Through the service of a prince—by acting as steward or administrative agent of some sort—even serfs occasionally gained wealth and power; yet in the eyes of the gentry they never lost their base blood and it was long before their origin could be forgotten. Another avenue to advancement was the church. By entering the priesthood, a peasant had the prospect of securing a parish through nomination of some patron, usually a landlord of the locality. Yet such priests had to spend their lives among the people, like them poor and, all too often, ignorant. The prizes of the profession, the great bishoprics and abbacies, went as a rule to younger sons of noble families through the favor of some territorial prince. To secure one of these great offices was a matter of political influence, perhaps of cash purchase; and the successful candidate became the vassal of the patron, as he would for any other fief.

The  
church and  
feudalism

With the lapse of the Carolingian reform, and with the feudalization of the state, prelates generally came to be distinguished for qualities other than piety and learning. We hear of many bishops who, unmindful of ecclesiastical law, personally took part in warfare; and of mere laymen who became abbots solely for the sake of the attendant income. As a whole, the clergy formed no separate class in society, but tended by association and common interest to be identified with either the aristocracy or the peasantry.

## 2. THE LIFE OF THE NOBILITY

Intimately connected with feudalism, though not identified with it, was the set of customs known as chivalry. The word is derived from the French *chevalier*, cavalryman or knight; hence chivalry was the code of etiquette implied by knighthood. In the early feudal age the boy of noble birth, unless destined for an ecclesiastical career, was not expected to have an education in letters.

Chivalry



Since his profession was to be that of a mounted warrior, his training was centered in arms and horsemanship. When he was still a mere child, his lessons began in riding and in the use of weapons. His graduation from this rude school may be said to have been the attainment of knightly rank. But first he had to pass through two preliminary grades. Commonly he would serve in some feudal court as page (French *valet*), learning how to conduct himself in polite society and continuing his martial exercises. Later, in his early teens, the youth would rise to be a knight's assistant, known as a squire (French *écuyer*, shield-bearer). Eventually he would be allowed to ride to battle with his elders, and, after proving his fitness for the honor, he would be knighted—an act which could be performed by any other knight, but which would naturally devolve upon the lord at whose court the boy had been brought up.

The final ceremony was the *adoubement*,<sup>6</sup> when the candidate was formally invested with the arms and armor that betokened his maturity—obviously a perpetuation of the ancient Germanic custom described by Tacitus. Originally, therefore, chivalry was non-Christian, and in the early period it had no feminine implications. It was essentially the standard of conduct imposed on members of the warrior class to govern their relations with one another. The knight should be brave to the point of foolhardiness. He should fight according to certain accepted rules, scorning tricks and strategy as savoring of cowardice. He should be loyal to his friends. He should keep his plighted word. He should treat a conquered foe with gallantry. Yet, although the gentleman was chivalrous toward social equals and their women-folk, he felt no such obligation toward the base-born. In this respect, as in all, his attitude was intensely aristocratic. The fact that in contemporary records *miles* (Latin for soldier) always means the mounted fighter summarizes a whole chapter in the history of warfare. And the virtual equivalence of knight, noble, and vassal well illustrates the social constitution of the early feudal age.

The  
Bayeux  
Tapestry

On the subject of chivalry our best sources are the French epics,<sup>7</sup> which also give us precious information concerning feudal warfare. But the most vivid picture of the eleventh-century knight is to be found in the famous Bayeux Tapestry, an embroi-

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the English "dubbing" to knighthood. See above, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> See below, pp. 291 f.

dery made to decorate the interior of the cathedral in that city and still preserved in the local museum (see Plate I). It is a strip of linen twenty inches wide and over 230 feet long, with scenes worked in colored worsted to describe the Norman Conquest of England.<sup>8</sup> Although the story thus told is interesting as a partisan tradition, the great historical value of the tapestry lies in its realistic presentation of contemporary life. This unique work, probably completed before 1100, allows us to be positive with regard to many odd details of military activity, of domestic habits, and, above all, of costume. (See Plate I.)

On ordinary occasions men of all classes wore tunic and hose. The former was a loose-fitting jacket belted in at the waist; the latter were a sort of tights pulled on over the legs, which were further protected by strips of cloth or leather wound like modern puttees from the knees to the shoe-tops. For warmth or ceremony the man might also throw over his shoulders a mantle, fastened with a buckle or pin on the right side to leave the sword arm free. Women were dressed in robes of almost classic simplicity extending from the chin to the ground. For outdoor wear both sexes used cloaks fitted with hoods that could be brought over the head in bad weather. Even the very wealthy wore plain clothes, substituting for homespun the finer stuffs trimmed with fur. Einhard tells us that Charlemagne very seldom put on Roman dress; that he normally preferred his native Frankish costume. And his attitude was maintained by the princes of the Middle Ages, who submitted to long robes only on extraordinary occasions. In the Bayeux Tapestry the English king, when sitting on his throne, appears with a crown, orb, and scepter; the duke of Normandy, only with a mace.

Civil  
costume

Defensive armor in this early period was not elaborate. The knight's lower legs remained unprotected. Over the upper body he wore a hauberk, a shirt of link mail slashed at the bottom so that it could in some way be fastened about the thigh. His head was covered with a helmet, a conical steel cap with a narrow extension in front to serve as a nose-guard, and with mail attached at the rear to hang down over the nape of the neck. On his left arm the knight bore a kite-shaped shield some four feet long. It was presumably made of wood faced with metal and was customarily decorated with some fanciful design. For of-

Arms and  
armor

<sup>8</sup> See below, pp. 281 f.

fense his weapons were principally a cross-hilted sword slung on a belt at the left side, and a lance about eight feet long which was held couched by the right hand. In the Bayeux Tapestry the French knights are not shown using battle-axes, though from other sources it would appear that they sometimes did so.

Feudal  
warfare

These facts help us to understand the character of feudal tenure. The obligation for knight service was heavy: one knight would include not merely the warrior himself, but a supply of expensive arms and armor, a change of horses, perhaps a squire and his mount, a number of grooms and other servants, and, finally, enough food to maintain all these men and animals for the specified period. The entire feudal host would obviously be several times larger than the body of knights who led the attack. Among them discipline was slight, for each gentleman considered himself the ally rather than the subordinate of the commander. Fighting for the lord did not at all prevent his fighting for himself; and except through personal acquisition of booty and captives, he stood to make nothing from the campaign. Pitched battles were infrequent; when one occurred, it resolved itself into a series of individual encounters—of charges and counter-charges with lances atilt, followed by hand-to-hand combat with sword and axe. There would be a magnificent display of knightly prowess, but little generalship. Although one side might gain much in honor and plunder and prisoners, the opposing force would largely escape, to fight again on some more fortunate day.

The feudal  
castle

Feudal warfare, as a matter of fact, was normally restricted to skirmishing between roving bands and the devastation of the enemy's territory. During most of the time the efforts of the combatants were concentrated in and about castles, which had come to serve as the principal defenses of every great fief. Originating largely as a center of refuge from the invading Northmen, the castle had now become a specialized form of stronghold, adapted to the needs of a feudal chieftain and his garrison of professional warriors. This form, after its two essential parts, is known as the motte-and-bailey castle (see Figure 4). The bailey was a court surrounded by a moat, an earthen embankment, and a palisade of tree trunks—or a series of such fortifications. Friends gained admittance by means of a gate and a drawbridge which could be let down for their special benefit. This bailey, enclosing houses, stables, and other necessary buildings, constituted the castle's outer defense. The motte was its more inac-

cessible portion—a rock, hill, or artificial mound, protected by a separate line of intrenchments. Here stood the donjon, a wooden tower with its own drawbridge giving access to what we should call its second story. Such a crude fortress, in an age that had forgotten Roman siegecraft, could offer stout resistance to attack, but—as illustrated on the Bayeux Tapestry—it was especially vulnerable to fire. To correct this fault by massive construction in stone was left to later and wealthier generations.

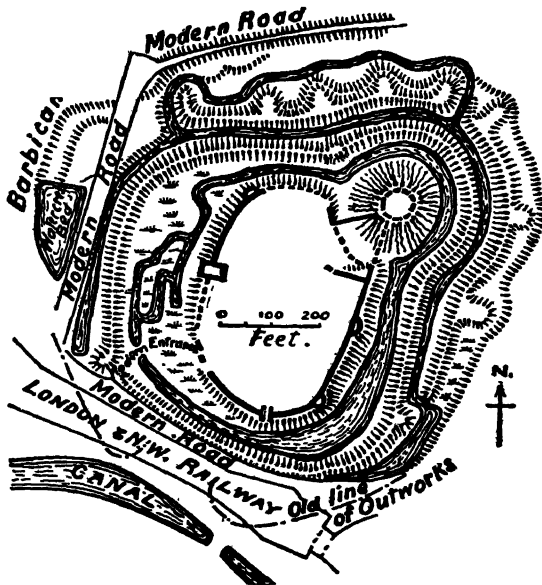


FIGURE 4.—PLAN OF A MOTTE-AND-BAILEY CASTLE: BERKHAMPSTEAD.\*

Like the barbarian described by Tacitus, the feudal noble considered himself primarily a warrior. This preference he carried into his amusements. The tournament familiarized by historical fiction was largely a pageant—a contest with a maximum of display and a minimum of bloodshed. In the primitive age, however, the tournament was an actual battle, differing from one in the field only because it was deliberately arranged in advance. One was as deadly as the other, and in both the victor claimed as spoil the horses and accouterments of the vanquished. Next

Feudal  
amuse-  
ments

\* Taken from E. S. Armitage, *Early Norman Castles of the British Isles*, Fig. 9 (John Murray; London, 1912).

to fighting, the noble loved hunting—riding down stags and other large game with dogs. So every prince maintained wide preserves in which he and his retainers enjoyed a monopoly of the chase. There too—and this was a recreation in which the ladies frequently joined—many days were spent in hawking. The taking of herons, pigeons, waterfowl, rabbits, and other small game by means of trained hawks, while the attendant company galloped across the country, was a sport which had continued to enjoy great popularity since Roman times, and which still flourishes in the orient. In the Middle Ages Norwegian falcons or fine hunting dogs ranked along with battle chargers as gifts fit for a king.

Food and  
drink

When condemned to remain indoors, the feudal gentleman seems to have spent his time largely in feasting, drinking, and gambling. Dice had been taken over from the Romans, and from them too had probably been learned a form of backgammon which the Middle Ages knew as tables. Chess was introduced in the west only after the crusade of 1095, and playing cards were a much later invention. Throughout the grape-raising provinces of the Roman Empire wine remained the standard drink, but in the more purely Germanic regions of the northwest its place, except in wealthy homes, was taken by beer. The quantities of each consumed by the average person were such as to stagger the imagination of the modern tippler. And temperance was equally unknown in eating. During the Middle Ages the appetite of the hunter and the fighter raged unchecked by an etiquette of delicacy.

When it is remembered that Louis XIV in his gorgeous palace of Versailles still ate with his fingers, much in the way of table manners cannot be expected of the mediæval gentleman. He supplied his own knife and with it served himself, and perhaps his lady; after that it was catch as catch can. Bones and scraps he threw on the floor for the dogs to fight over. His food was primarily flesh—commonly game, such as a deer or a boar roasted whole—with smaller dishes of fowl, cured meats, pasties, vegetables, and fruit. Bread and cheese were of course staples, but sweets were rare because the sole available sweetening was honey. Spices were luxuries found only on the tables of the great. On fast days, to be sure, the meats were supposed to disappear; then the platters were well filled with fish and eggs. As far as cooking

was concerned, we are led to believe that quantity was the principal consideration.

Princes commonly had castles as their chief residences; yet all classes of nobles spent much time in manor houses on favorite estates. In any case, the center of domestic life was the great hall, which, according to modern standards, was picturesque rather than comfortable. Heat was supplied by open fires, the smoke from which found its way out past the grimy rafters overhead. As windows were generally unglazed, the weather had to be kept out by means of shutters. The walls were hung with arms, banners, and trophies of the chase. The floor often was merely hard-trodden earth covered with straw or rushes, where the ever-present dogs made themselves at home. Light was furnished by candles. Here the lord sat in state to receive homage or to confer with his vassals in formal court. Here was spread the festive board, with the company seated on benches in order of rank. Here of an evening took place whatever literary entertainment the age afforded—the tales of heroic deeds chanted by wandering minstrels. And here, finally, after the lord and his family had retired to their chambers, would be laid the pallets of retainers and of guests who could not be accommodated elsewhere.

The  
baronial  
hall

The feudal gentleman did not have to be much of an administrator. Customary arrangements made the superintendence of landed property largely a matter of routine. The care of the house and servants was chiefly left to feminine management. Occasionally we hear of some extraordinary lady who, on the death of her husband, continued his work in the world, playing a dominant rôle in politics and warfare. Normally, however, the feudal age followed the good old maxim that woman's place is the home. Although we have every reason to believe that love was important in society even before it became a fashionable theme in literature, marriages among the aristocracy were as a rule dictated by dynastic and financial interest. The first requisite of the wife was to bring the inheritance of a fief, or at least a handsome dowry; the second was that she should bear at least one son. And if she were unfortunate in the latter respect, a complaisant bishop was usually at hand to declare the wedding invalid. In this regard, as in others, early feudal Europe was essentially a man's world.

The posi-  
tion of  
women

## 3. THE LIFE OF THE PEASANTRY

The manor However the beginnings of the manor may be explained—and endless controversy has raged on the subject—there can be little question of its nature in the feudal period. The term is derived from a word meaning a house,<sup>9</sup> in this case referring to that of the man who dominated the community. Normally the manor was a village controlled and exploited by a lord, as distinguished from a free village where the inhabitants worked only for themselves. But since the lord's authority was political as well as economic, his rights as a landowner were inextricably confused with those which we should classify as public—as properly belonging to the state. It was probably through the powers derived from the monarchy that the seignorial class had been able to extend its domination throughout the countryside. There is considerable evidence that the lord often took over an agrarian system which he had not created. In any case, the foundation of all manorial arrangements was agriculture.

Mediæval agriculture In this connection it is impossible to make absolute generalizations; customs varied according to climate, soil, and the aptitudes of the people. What held true in a fertile plain would not hold true in a mountainous region or in a country of marsh and sand dune. No one method of tillage could be applied to vineyards, orchards, and cornfields. What may be described as the standard, however, was an agricultural practice that widely prevailed throughout the northwest of mediæval Europe, where feudal institutions were earliest and most fully developed. There the staple crop was wheat or rye, for the raising of which plowing was fundamental. And in that operation certain common factors everywhere tended to produce uniform results. The soil, on account of shallow working, was very heavy; the plow, being only a small iron blade fastened on a wooden frame, was light. Draft animals, because of poor breeding and undernourishment, were small and scrawny. Merely to prepare a field for planting commonly required a team of eight oxen—all of which, together with a plow, the average peasant did not possess.

The open-field system The solution, obviously, was for a group of men to pool their resources and gain a living from the soil through cooperative agriculture. Economic necessity, apart from the need of pro-

<sup>9</sup> Latin *manerium*, from *manere*, to dwell; cf. the English "manse."

tection, thus forced the country population to dwell in villages. Within such a settlement each household was supposed to make a contribution toward a common fund, in either labor, materials, tools, or animals. It logically followed that each should have an equal portion of the harvest. If, however, the villager—or villein,<sup>10</sup> as he was technically described—had all his land in one place, the returns would vary according to the fertility of the allotment. So the usual plan was to equalize the holdings by forming them of strips scattered in all sections of the arable. Since the strips were not individually fenced, the whole arrangement is known as the open-field system. This most characteristic feature of mediæval agriculture, though long superseded in modern states, has left its mark not only on the countryside, but also on the languages of Europe.

In England, for example, the open field was divided into parcels called shots, and each of these was subdivided into acre strips. Such a strip would be bounded on the sides by ribbons of unplowed turf called balks, and at the ends, similarly, by headlands, on which the team could be turned about. The length of the strip was described as a furrow-long or furlong; the width as four perches, rods, or yards—not the cloth yard of modern usage, but the long stick used as an ox-goad. So the acre strip was held to include four yardlands, each measuring one perch by one furlong. The normal holding of the villein household was held to be thirty acres. The acre of the Middle Ages, however, did not always contain the same number of square feet by actual measurement. It was a plot of rather uncertain area based on little more than ancient usage. The important fact for estimating manorial values is that the average yield per acre was only six to eight bushels of wheat—a fourth of what might be expected on an ordinary Ohio farm.

Measures  
of land

The open-field system should not be confused with the three-field system, which originated in an entirely different way. Experience had long proved that land continuously devoted to the raising of wheat, rye, barley, or oats would quickly become exhausted. We know that the cause is the depletion of nitrogen which must be replaced before another good harvest of grain can be secured. Today this is done by applying a fertilizer or by

The  
three-field  
system

<sup>10</sup> To designate the mediæval peasant, this spelling will be preferred to "villain," which will be left to bear its modern implication. How the baseness of the villein came to make him a villain is an interesting problem for the philologist.



planting a nitrogen-producing crop, such as peas, beans, clover, or alfalfa. In the Middle Ages no one understood the scientific rotation of crops. Vegetables were grown only in separate plots and hay was obtained only from natural meadows. There were no manufactured nitrates to buy. Manure was scarce because domestic animals were few. So the only available method of preventing exhaustion was that of allowing the land to lie fallow once in a while. In the case of the two-field system the arable was divided into two portions, which would alternately be turned into pasture. The three-field system was more advantageous, except in comparatively barren regions. Under it one-third of the land rested every year; of the remainder one-half was planted with a spring crop and the other half with an autumn crop. The fallow was only scantily refertilized through the plowing under of weeds and through incidental manuring by animals put out to graze, yet the process was sufficient to maintain the agricultural routine for an indefinite period.

Rights of  
common

The typical villein, as we have seen, had about thirty acres of arable in scattered strips. In the cultivated fields all the work of plowing, harrowing, sowing, reaping, and the like was done by the villeins in common; but at the end each got only what was raised on his own acres. After the harvest each strip-owner had the right of turning his beasts into the field; and before that they could be pastured on the fallow and on the common waste—such as marsh and rocky hillside. Meadow was carefully set aside as the only source of hay. Woods provided not only fuel and lumber, but also feed for swine, which were allowed to run wild and live as best they might. The mediæval village was thus based on cooperative labor and rights of common, not on communism. Individual property in land was fundamental, and we have no evidence of a time when it had not been so.

The  
peasant's  
home

Along with his arable, each peasant, of course, had his own house—the meanest sort of hut, commonly made of wattle plastered with mud, and provided with a roof of straw thatch. Adjoining it was a small plot where he could plant a vegetable garden and keep a few geese or chickens. Here he and his family lived in what to us would seem unbearable filth; but in those days even members of the aristocracy were not particular in such matters. The peasant's clothes were of the coarsest, his belongings of the simplest. His furniture would be little more than a rude table and a bench or two, his beds only bags of straw laid on the floor.

His principal food was black bread, supplemented by dairy produce, eggs, and a few coarse vegetables. Occasionally he might enjoy a fowl; normally he could not afford meat. Game and fish he was forbidden to take. Sheep, cows, and oxen were too precious for slaughtering, except when the approach of winter and the lack of fodder made it imperative—and then the cost of salt led to very insufficient curing. The peasant, however, had a plenteous supply of home-brewed beer or, in favorable regions, of very ordinary wine.

A traveler through the countryside in the feudal age would have no difficulty in perceiving the subjection of the agricultural village to seignorial control, for the settlement would be dominated by the manor house. In this age it was normally built of wood. Sometimes, especially when used by the lord as a dwelling, it was defended by a moat and a drawbridge. Often, however, the manor house served merely as administrative headquarters under the charge of a resident steward. Surrounding it, in any case, was the lord's close, containing gardens, fruit trees, beehives, barns, stables, and other outbuildings. Here was stored the produce from the estate, together with the usual wagons and agricultural implements. The lord generally had his own meadow; but his arable, as a rule, consisted of acre strips scattered among those of his tenants. And like them, he would pasture his beasts on the common. All labor required to maintain the lord's particular property—known as the manorial demesne or inland—was left to be done by the villeins. They cultivated the lord's arable along with their own, harvested the crops, threshed out the grain, and disposed of it according to instructions. To see that all rightful obligations were performed, so that the estate would show the normal profit, was the responsibility of the steward. He it was also who held the manorial court for the settlement of disputes among the peasants, the trial of persons accused of petty offenses, and the general enforcement of the lord's authority. In all such matters law was held to be not the will of the lord or his steward, but the custom of the manor as stated by the best men of the locality.

The manor  
house and  
the inland

It has already been shown that the entire feudal class was supported, directly or indirectly, by the peasants. This fact should not be taken to imply that, in general, the latter were cruelly treated. In time of war, of course, the people of the countryside were the first to suffer from the enemy's attack, and

The lord  
and his  
peasants

there were always barons who acted like brigands—especially toward the defenseless tenants of neighboring churches. Even the nobles who were appointed official “protectors” of ecclesiastical estates frequently gained an evil reputation as tyrants and despoilers. Of his own men, however, a lord would naturally be somewhat considerate; without them his lands would be worthless. Although the average peasant’s life may seem inconceivably hard by comparison with modern conditions, it was all that he knew or hoped for; and it was, after all, reasonably secure. Even serfdom was infinitely preferable to starvation or to the constant fear of death by violence. Under the lord’s protection the peasant was assured only a bare living; yet it was, none the less, a living.

Serfs and  
villeins

Except in England after the Norman Conquest,<sup>11</sup> villein and serf were not equivalent terms. The latter, like the Roman *servus*, was the bodily property of a master; the former was not necessarily servile, although he was commonly attached to the soil and subjected to some lord’s arbitrary authority. He often resembled rather the Roman *colonus*, who remained legally a freeman. But the serf could not be sold apart from the soil which he possessed and cultivated like any other peasant, and a liberty such as that of the average free villein could not have been especially valuable. The really superior peasants were those described in the records as so free that they owed only fixed services, or so free that they could sell their holdings and depart. Compared with them, the majority of peasants were unfree. This unfreedom, however, was economic rather than legal, and it continued only until new social developments provided ways of escape. In the Dark Age the manorial system became practically universal because under it, and only under it, the mass of the people found the possibility of livelihood. The feudal noble who exploited the peasantry owed his position not so much to his own rapacious greed as to the defenseless condition of the countryside and the actual needs of the inhabitants. The manor was a very simple administrative machine which, assuring food and protection to the mass of the people, ran on and on with amazingly little supervision.

If these considerations are kept in mind, it will be understood why the obligations of the peasant community cannot be sharply

<sup>11</sup> See below, p. 288.

classified either according to the nature of what was owed or according to the status of the persons liable. In this latter connection all that can be affirmed is that the services of the freest tenants were generally fixed, whereas those of the more servile tenants remained unrestricted. Even this generalization should not be pushed too far; all agrarian arrangements depended on local custom, which was hardly the same in any two places. The variety of rents, for example, was almost infinite. Although each peasant normally owed the lord certain payments, the times when they were due were distributed throughout the year, and the specified amounts might be anything produced on the manor. It was only in the later age that sums of money were commonly substituted for rents in kind.

Peasant  
obliga-  
tions:  
Rents

Virtually every peasant was also responsible for labor service, or *corvée*, for it was in this way that the lord's inland was taken care of. Lowest of all were the men said to be *corvéable à merci*, bound to do anything commanded them at any time. The average villein owed rather a certain number of days each week, together with extra days in spring and autumn for sowing and harvest. A fortunate few might be free of all except such boon works on special occasions. While ordinary *corvées* had to do with agriculture, others resembled what we think of as political services. The burden of repairing roads and bridges naturally fell on the peasants. It was they who actually built the castles, and it was they who were regularly called on to strengthen the fortifications. The military obligations of the rural population in France—commonly known as *ost et chevauchée*—were an almost continuous plague. Villeins were of course not prized as combatants except in case of emergency; normally they were demanded rather to transport supplies and to work about the camp. In this respect as in others the man of the people, though un-honored, was extremely useful.

*Corvées*

How the average peasant spent his time is accordingly no mystery, for it must be remembered that, when he was not toiling for the lord, he had his own household to support. In this enterprise he had the assistance of his family. His wife, sons, and daughters all labored in the fields, and since the service owed the lord consisted of certain units due from the peasant's land as a whole, it could be performed by any able-bodied man. We frequently hear of poor villeins who had no arable in the village, but only huts and gardens. Such cotters were available when

extra help was needed, for it was only by doing odd jobs that they could pick up a living. Exceptional in another way were the skilled craftsmen who might be placed at specialized tasks instead of ordinary labor. One villager, for example, would maintain a smithy for the repair of iron tools and another would have charge of the local mill. And along with the smiths and the millers—whose name is yet legion—there might also be peasants who in some degree served as masons, carpenters, leather-workers, and the like. Such an artisan still lived primarily by cultivating his own lands, following his trade as a sort of specialized *corvée* and paying his rent in articles of manufacture. He was like the parish priest who, while holding a share of the arable, devoted most of his energy to the saving of souls.

Extraor-  
dinary  
payments

Whether legally free or unfree, the peasant and his family constituted a valuable asset within the estate. If a son entered the priesthood, he was lost to the manor; so it was everywhere the rule that such a step could not be taken until the lord's permission had been obtained, and that might not be gratuitous. For the same reason a daughter could not be wedded outside the manor without the payment to the lord of a sum known in France as *formariage*.<sup>12</sup> On the peasant's death his holding passed as a matter of course to his children, but on one ground or another the lord frequently claimed all the chattels. The villein, having no right of inheriting movables, was said to have a dead hand (*mainmorte*)—a term which was then applied to the lord's right of seizing the best beast as a token. Occasionally we also find villeins contributing a yearly head tax (*chevage*) in recognition of their personal subordination.

Tallage

The local impost known as tallage or *taille*, on the other hand, seems by origin to have been connected with the lord's military and judicial authority. The name is derived from *tailler*, to cut—a reference to the primitive method of keeping accounts by means of notched sticks, or tallies. A sum of money was represented by a series of peculiar cuts across the grain, and the stick was then split down through the cuts, so that one half would serve as a receipt when matched with the other. The tallage itself was a more or less informal contribution taken from all peasants under the lord's jurisdiction. Frequently it was levied annually, but sometimes only when there was special need. If

<sup>12</sup> From the Latin *foris*, outside, and *maritagium*, marriage.

the amount was restricted solely by the tenant's ability to pay, he was said to be *taillable à merci*. And the fact that the sum taken was sometimes called a "gift" or an "aid" hardly made the burden lighter. In this way, if in no other, the villein was prevented from accumulating undue wealth. It should, however, be noted that he was always left with the means of subsistence, and that, when overtaken by calamity, he got food, clothing, shelter, and even new equipment at the lord's expense.

Within the rural community the lord also enjoyed certain customary monopolies. Game and fish could be taken only by his permission, and poaching was severely punished. The villein was allowed to gather fallen branches in the woods either for fuel or for minor building purposes, but the lord's license was required for the cutting of standing timber. Sometimes the lord had his own mint, and he normally held control of local trade. This was exercised by issuing regulations known as *bans*, the proceeds from which were called *banalités*. He thus established official weights and measures and enforced their use in the market, levying customary tolls on all articles displayed for sale. Commonly he had the only lawful winepress, mill, and bake-oven. And for the service which the peasant was forced to accept he had to contribute a percentage of his wine, flour, or bread. In this same category may be included the lord's income from the manorial court—fees collected from the parties to suits and fines assessed for violations of the local law. Justice in the Middle Ages was highly regarded as a source of profit, and all too often, especially when enforced over other people's tenants, was made an excuse for sheer extortion.

The lord's  
monopolies

The items enumerated in this section, when combined, will be seen to constitute the manorial income that any nobleman received from his *demesne*. His feudal income was what he obtained from infeudated estates; but that, as may easily be realized, was ultimately derived from some vassal's manorial income. Eventually every obligation of a superior was passed on down the scale to the peasant at the bottom. Once this truth is appreciated, the economic basis of feudal society will be clearly understood and an intelligent approach can be made to the economic history of the later Middle Ages.

## CHAPTER XII

### FEUDAL STATES AND ADVENTURERS

#### I. FRANCE AND THE FRENCH

The legend of the year 1000 HISTORIANS of an older generation tell a very pretty story with regard to the opening of the eleventh century. From the Apocalypse in the New Testament men had learned to expect the end of the world in the year 1000. Then, they believed, would be heard the dread sound of the last trump, summoning all to final judgment. Consequently, as the fateful hour approached, a wave of piety swept Europe. Men turned from the sordid routine of existence to prepare their souls for the blessed hereafter. The year arrived and the world did not come to an end, but the idealistic surge, having gained a momentum that could not be checked, rolled onward. The papacy advanced to an unprecedented height of power. At its bidding, great hosts marched eastward to redeem the Holy Sepulcher. Cathedrals, typifying the new spirit and emblazoning a new art, rose in air. Trade grew, cities sprang up, learning revived, civilization flourished. The splendor of mediæval culture can thus be traced back to a mistaken confidence in the word of Scripture.

This is what historians once asked their readers to believe. And to whom would such an engaging narrative not appeal? Unhappily it is false. Research has proved that, if people feared the year 1000 more than another, they gave no evidence of the fact; that the chronicles of the later tenth century reflect no unusual perturbation of mind; that the references in contemporary documents to "the approaching end of the world" were mere rhetorical flourishes used long before and long after that particular time. There was, indeed, no reason why any one should have especially dreaded the year 1000, for the millennium of which the Apocalypse speaks in veiled terms began with the death of Christ, not with His birth. This pretty story, like many another, must therefore be classified among the legends of history. Yet the century following the year 1000 actually witnessed a great improvement in conditions throughout western Europe—the beginnings of a cultural advance which has been virtually

continuous down to the present. The rejection of the legend merely forces us to substitute another and sounder explanation.

To do so is by no means a simple task. The decline of ancient civilization, as we have seen, presents an extremely complex and difficult problem, for which no definitive solution has as yet been found. We are now confronted by a similar problem: how civilization once more arose in the west and why it developed those peculiar features which we know as mediæval. At this point no generalization can be attempted. The evidence must first be examined, and it is too extensive to put into one chapter. Among the topics that must be taken up are the conflict between the reinvigorated papacy and the German kingdom, the Norman conquests of England and southern Italy, the Christian offensive against the Moors in Spain, and the great crusade of 1095. These in turn introduce such broad subjects as the reform of religion, the stimulation of higher education, the advance of literature and the arts, the expansion of trade and industry, the increase of population, and the development on all sides of new urban centers. A mere list like the foregoing can, of course, have little meaning at present. It may, however, serve to indicate that by the close of the eleventh century Europe was well on the road to recovery. And since at that time the cultural leadership of Europe was held by the French, it might be well to see something of their earlier character and achievements.

The  
recovery  
of Europe

In 987 the throne of the western Frankish kingdom was secured by Hugh Capet of the Parisian house.<sup>1</sup> His ambitions had been rewarded only after thirty years of costly endeavor. By the time of his coronation he was no longer a rich and powerful prince like his father, Hugh the Great. The duchy of Burgundy had been given to his brother Robert, and of the great Neustrian march there remained nothing more than a small fragment lying between the Seine and the Loire. This territory, called the *Île de France*, was an irregular strip some hundred miles long and, on the average, about a third that in width. On the north it reached Laon, on the south Orléans. Its center was Paris, which thenceforth was to be the capital of France. Besides, the king had various isolated patches, of which the more important were about Corbie and Bourges. Such was the royal domain of the eleventh century—not an estate which the king held by virtue of

The  
Capetian  
domain

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 248.



his kingly office, but a duchy which he continued to possess as the heir of the Parisian counts. Narrow as it was, it gave the monarchy a definite position to fall back on. In an age when the royal authority had been reduced to a mere title, that was a matter of considerable importance.

For a long time there was to be no question of reviving the king's power throughout his kingdom as a whole. The problem was rather to save what was left of the Neustrian march. Throughout the Île de France were many petty *seigneuries* over which the king had slight authority, if any. Equally troublesome were the numerous *châtelains* who, though supposed to be mere keepers of the king's castles, generally defied their lord and lived by rapine. From his own estates the king enjoyed the manorial income of the ordinary feudal noble. Agents styled *prévôts* supervised the exploitation of his lands, collected his revenues, held his courts, and summoned the peasantry for military service and *corvées*. But they also proved hard to control; frequently, instead of their lawful share, they kept all the proceeds of administration and claimed their offices as fiefs.

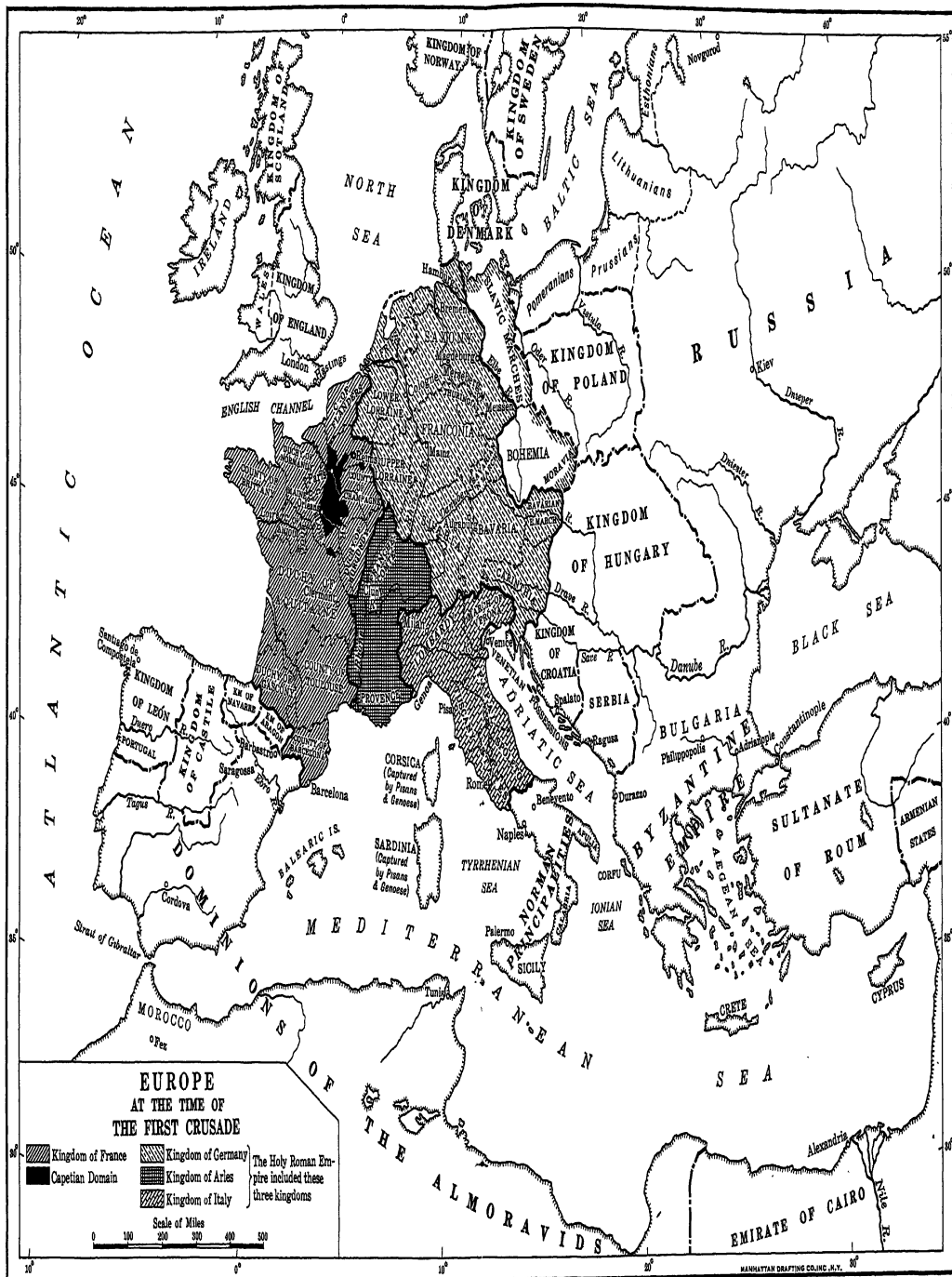
What redeemed the situation for the early Capetians was the support which they received from the great ecclesiastics of the north. In or near the Île de France were many wealthy abbeys and bishoprics subject to royal patronage and protection. The king not only named the holders of these ecclesiastical offices, but also enjoyed many powers of direct jurisdiction within their estates. Most of his time was spent in visiting first one loyal prelate and then another. In the case of rebellion against his authority, it was they who supplied a large part of the necessary troops and provisions. His resources, however, were at the best meager. Compared with many of his vassals, the eleventh-century king—except in the matter of theoretical eminence—was a rather insignificant person.

The first  
four  
Capetians  
(987-1108)

Although sizable volumes have been written about the first four Capetians, our actual knowledge of them is surprisingly slight. Hugh Capet is chiefly remarkable for the fact that a dynasty was named after him. Yet all that he did was to have his son Robert crowned during his own lifetime, setting a precedent followed by his successors for the next two centuries. During that time the ceremony remained essentially the same. On the day appointed by the king the coronation of his heir took place in the cathedral of Reims. After the archbishop had cele-









brated mass, he formally explained his right to cast the first vote and chose the prince as his candidate for the throne. This "election" was then repeated in order of precedence by the other prelates and nobles. The populace approved by shouting. Finally the new king was formally invested with the symbols of regal office, though perhaps not anointed with the consecrated oil till after the death of his father. Thanks to the continuation of this policy and to an unfailing supply of heirs, each of the early Capetians was peacefully succeeded by his son. So Hugh Capet was followed by Robert (996-1031), Henry I (1031-60), and Philip I (1060-1108). But these long reigns were singularly empty.

Because of a monkish education and an interest in theology, Robert was known as the Pious; yet, in spite of his ability to read Latin, he seems to have been a good soldier. His one notable success was the acquisition of Burgundy on the death of his uncle, the duke. This action, however, brought no real increase of the royal domain, for the duchy was at once given to the king's younger son; and the latter, by means of a successful war against his brother, Henry I, made good his claim to independent authority. Henry likewise became embroiled with various other rebellious vassals; and although he was saved from complete humiliation by their dissensions, the conflict brought him no renown. Nor was the renown of the monarchy enhanced by Philip I. It is true that he added to his domain one or two petty districts, but this was slight achievement for a reign of nearly half a century, during which his barons made the name of France illustrious throughout the entire Mediterranean world. It was, in fact, the virtual accession of Louis VI toward the close of the century that first shed luster on the Capetian name.

In spite of the dynastic change, the eleventh century thus witnessed no alteration in the relative strength of king and baronage among the West Franks. Brittany to all intents and purposes remained a foreign state, and the territory south of the Loire was almost as far removed from royal influence. The counts of Barcelona and of Toulouse, like the dukes of Gascony and of Aquitaine, ruled their respective principalities without paying any attention to their theoretical sovereign, except to date their acts in the year of his reign. By construction, their lands are commonly described as royal fiefs; yet they never appeared at the Capetian court for the rendering of homage or for any

Aquitaine  
and the  
south

other service. Two more centuries were to elapse before the king's authority was to extend into the fair region of the Midi, which spoke its own language, Provençal, and remained true to its own cultural traditions. Politically it was dominated by the counts of Poitiers, who by the end of the tenth century had definitely secured the duchy of Aquitaine. A series of able rulers, they not only kept their near-kingdom from disintegrating, but considerably enlarged it. Gascony was permanently incorporated under William VIII (1058-86) and Toulouse narrowly escaped the same fate at the hands of his son, William IX. As it was, Aquitaine by 1100 had become a broad realm extending from the Loire to the Pyrenees and from the Bay of Biscay to the Rhone.

Blois and  
Anjou

What contemporaries called France (*Francia*) was merely the old march of Neustria, which had now shrunk to the Île de France. As the Parisian counts had earlier become independent of the Carolingians, so various subvassals tended to become independent of the Parisians. Two viscounts, in particular, laid the foundations of important states—the counties of Blois and Anjou. In the early eleventh century these fiefs were inherited respectively by Odo II and Fulk Nerra, great warriors and bitter rivals. To his own county Odo united that of Champagne, a miscellaneous group of lands that had been acquired by the counts of Troyes. This led to a war with King Henry I, who would have fared badly if it had not been for the aid of the Angevins. Odo, beaten in the west, took up a series of projects to the eastward, in the course of which he lost his life. Under his successors Blois dropped back to second rank among the feudal states of the north. Anjou, on the other hand, continued to advance from one victory to another, until its rulers threatened to secure all France, as well as England. The terrible Fulk Nerra was the greatest warrior of his day, and his policies were continued by an equally fierce and capable son, Geoffrey Martel. Between them these princes took lands from both Blois and Aquitaine. They found their match only in the Norman duke, who resisted their attacks and eventually forced them to abandon the territory of Maine.

Burgundy  
and  
Flanders

Burgundy and Flanders, as already noted, originated as marches under Charles the Bald. The former, having come into the possession of Hugh the Great, passed to his second son, and then to the second son of Robert the Pious. Thenceforth it

continued under the same family for some three hundred years. During this whole period Burgundy remained a comparatively poor and backward state, the rulers of which are scarcely heard of in connection with the great events of the age. Flanders, on the contrary, occupied a position of outstanding importance in mediæval Europe—eminent alike in the fields of political, economic, and cultural achievement. The successors of Baldwin Iron-Arm were indeed a remarkable line. Using as a base the county lying between the Scheldt and the sea, they took skillful advantage of their frontier position to obtain various fiefs from the German king. Baldwin V (1036-67) married his daughter to William of Normandy and himself acted as regent in France during the minority of Philip I. His younger son, Robert the Frisian, was a great adventurer. Failing in a series of desperate excursions to Spain and Norway, he was fortunate enough to find a more practical enterprise nearer home. Marriage to the widow of the count of Holland made him regent of that territory, and eventually, after a series of wars, he secured Flanders as well. Having crushed all opposition, he spent two years in pilgrimage to Jerusalem, whence he returned to die at a ripe old age in 1093. It is no wonder that his son gained renown as a crusader.

In the meantime, the commercial revival that was to revolutionize Europe was already being felt in Flanders.<sup>2</sup> A wave of prosperity swept the country and made its ruler the richest prince in France. Lord of wide dominions on both sides of the frontier, supreme protector of wealthy churches, patron of many rising towns, and head of an efficient government, he carried on the best political traditions of the age. Although he himself owed his position to the disintegration of the Carolingian monarchy, he saw to it that his own rights did not go by the same road. From his castles—such as Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and Arras—radiated an orderly administration. The *châtelains*, though holding their offices by feudal settlement, were kept in close control and continued to act primarily as the count's agents in military, financial, and judicial matters. Altogether, we here find an example of the feudal state at its best. In actual might the count of Flanders had no western rival except the duke of Normandy, and that only after the latter had conquered England.

In 911 Charles the Simple had invested the viking Hrolf with

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 343 f.



Normandy  
and the  
Normans

a duchy at the mouth of the Seine. For another half-century migration continued from the old homeland, but eventually Normandy took on its familiar aspect—a saddle of territory reaching from the peninsula of the Cotentin almost to the Somme. Concerning the internal history of the country during this early period we have only legendary accounts, and even after authentic records begin, the dukes remain little more than names until we reach the illustrious William whom contemporaries called the Bastard. His father was Robert the Magnificent, fifth duke; his mother Arlette, daughter of a Falaise tanner. Though the union was unhallowed by the church, it was not contrary to Norman habit and seems to have been eugenically perfect. The boy William, called to the ducal throne when his father started on the holy pilgrimage from which he never returned, was brought up in the rude school of feudal warfare. He proved an apt pupil. By the time that he was thirty he had crushed the rebellious baronage, beaten off the savage Bretons, taken Maine from the Angevins in spite of the king's opposition, secured a marriage alliance with Flanders, and begun the plans that led to his conquest of England.

If at this time we look for a sharp distinction between the Normans and their neighbors, we fail to find it. By the eleventh century the culture and institutions of Normandy were thoroughly French. Perhaps there was a peculiarly northern iciness in the temper of the Norman, but in general he merely shared the hardness of the feudal age. And although viking traits may also be detected in the Norman passion for combat under distant skies, it should be remembered that the so-called Norman armies were drawn from all the adjacent regions. The Normans merely carried to the peak of perfection the characteristic ideals of contemporary France; they were only the greatest of many great French adventurers. In every warlike expedition of the feudal nobility we find the Normans well up toward the front; and wherever they went, they showed an uncanny faculty for seizing political opportunity and turning it, often by unscrupulous means, to their own advantage. These traits they pre-eminently displayed on the great crusade of 1095. Yet, long before that, the Normans had become famous—or infamous, according to the point of view—in Italy, Spain, and England.

The chaotic conditions that prevailed in Italy by the opening of the tenth century have already been briefly noticed. A hun-

dred years later the situation remained little changed, except that the German kings now claimed the crown of the Lombards.<sup>3</sup> But even the theoretical kingdom that had long been fought over by northern princes did not extend throughout the lower peninsula. There a series of petty nobles, some of them holding of the Byzantine emperor, engaged in a never-ending war of siege and skirmish, varied by attacks of Saracen raiders and outbursts of violent insurrection on the part of dissatisfied subjects. Opportunities for mercenary service and loot were therefore abundant, and among the adventurers drawn by this congenial environment were the inevitable bands of Normans. From the first years of the eleventh century we hear of them enlisting under various local employers, and as early as 1030 a certain Norman knight was rewarded with the little fief of Aversa, lying to the north of Naples. His success naturally attracted a swarm of newcomers, among whom were a group of brothers destined to begin a new political epoch for the central Mediterranean.

The  
Normans  
in Italy

An obscure Norman gentleman named Tancred of Hauteville had been blessed—and this was not unusual in those days—with twelve sons, five by his first wife and seven by his second. Being devoid of prospects at home, the younger boys, like hundreds of their compatriots, took to the roads of adventure, and eventually most of them turned up in southern Italy. There, by the middle of the century, three of the brothers Hauteville—William Iron-Arm, Humphrey, and Drogo—had made great reputations, and under their leadership an army of Normans had found it even more profitable to fight for themselves than to fight for others. Seizing castles in the mountains of the interior, they rapidly developed haphazard brigandage into organized conquest. William was the first elected count of these feudal adventurers; later his place was taken by his half-brother Robert Guiscard (the Sly), who by sheer native force and cleverness rose from a free-lance robber to create and rule a splendid state.

Robert Guiscard, with the help of his brother Roger, completed the systematic reduction of the southern peninsula, and from there turned covetous eyes upon the glorious island of Sicily, held since the ninth century by the Saracens. Meanwhile the bitter conflict of the papacy and the empire had reached a crisis; and this, for reasons that will be explained in the next

Robert  
Guiscard  
(d. 1085)  
and Count  
Roger  
(d. 1101)

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 300 f.

chapter, brought Robert the legal recognition that he otherwise might have desired in vain. In 1059, after surviving many anathemas, the ex-brigand was accepted by the pope as a vassal of the Apostolic See and formally proclaimed duke of Apulia and Calabria. To Count Roger, his brother, was immediately intrusted the conquest of Sicily—a project blessed by the pope as a holy war against the infidel. Messina was taken in 1061, Palermo in 1072; and although the Mohammedans still held out in other parts of the island, it was only a matter of time until they were forced to surrender. Thus were laid the foundations of the great Norman kingdom that in the following century was to become a marvel of the European world.

Spain in  
the tenth  
century

Another theater of constant warfare was the Spanish peninsula, where the Omniad caliphate of Cordova, after reaching its height of splendor in the tenth century, rapidly declined in the eleventh. Moslem culture still kept its brilliance, but the country lost all political cohesion, falling under the control of a dozen local emirs. This situation naturally provided the opportunity for a Christian offensive, which might have gained headway somewhat earlier if the Christians too had not suffered from disunion. At the eastern end of the Pyrenees the old march of Charlemagne had become the virtually independent county of Barcelona. To the westward the Basque mountaineers, fighting with equal zeal against all invaders, had successfully defended themselves against both Frank and Moslem, and so had eventually made possible the foundation of two little kingdoms, Aragon and Navarre. In the mountains of Asturias, meanwhile, other Christians had similarly maintained their independence. And from this region a small Galician state, the origins of which are lost in a mist of legend, grew into the kingdom of León, extending south to the Douro River. The kingdom of Castile was originally a frontier county of León, named after the castles that had been built to defend it.

The  
French  
in the  
Spanish  
wars

In the eleventh century León and Castile, which for a time were united under one king, both expanded rapidly: the former into Portugal as far as Coimbra and the latter over the interior as far as Toledo. Navarre, after reaching the Ebro, found the way barred by Aragon. That kingdom, indeed, was long unable to make any progress against the emirate of Saragossa to the south, but a great victory at Barbastro in 1065 opened the way to the annexation of the lower Ebro valley in the next century.

These conquests could hardly have been made by the little Spanish kingdoms, had they been dependent solely on their own resources. From the beginning of their offensive they had drawn an endless supply of eager recruits from the French principalities to the north. Since the ninth century the shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostella had been a famous center of pilgrimages from all parts of western Christendom, and out of the streams of armed men who came thither many were found to serve in the holy war against the Moslem. In the eleventh century the great monastery of Cluny,<sup>4</sup> and eventually the papacy, gave active support to the cause, issuing widespread appeals for enlistment under the banner of Christ and holding forth the promise of extraordinary spiritual benefits to any who should die on so sacred an undertaking.

It is to be suspected, however, that most of the adventurers were attracted not so much by the prospect of a martyr's paradise as by that of booty and conquest. As would be expected, a host of volunteers came from the nearby territories of Gascony, Toulouse, and Aquitaine; yet men of the northern fiefs also crossed the Pyrenees in large numbers—especially Normans and Burgundians. One of the latter group, a son of the duke, secured the county of Portugal as dowry with a princess of León and so founded what was to become the Portuguese royal house. And many another French knight won for himself a Spanish fief at the expense of the infidel. To warriors of this type the crusade of 1095 came as merely another and greater adventure.

## 2. THE NORMAN CONQUEST OF ENGLAND

Previously we have seen how the kingdom of England emerged in the early tenth century as the consequence of a successful war against the Danish invaders. Under the talented house of Alfred the monarchy remained strong and prosperous until the last quarter of the century. Then, in 978, there came to the throne the unfortunate man whom contemporaries called Æthelred the Redeless, meaning that he never knew the right thing to do. In the absence of any permanent administrative machine, the efficiency of a state in this early age normally depended on the character of the king; so the accession of a ruler like Æthelred inevitably spelled trouble. Actually the kingdom, though nominally brought

Æthelred  
the  
Redeless  
(978-1016)

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp. 306 f.

under one system of government, was far from unified. The Danish regions in particular, being largely populated by Scandinavian adventurers and colonists, had not as yet been assimilated to the rest of the country. The aldermen placed there were hardly more than viking *jarls*, likely at any favorable opportunity to break away from royal control—in which project they could find many helpers among the freebooters who still roamed the northern seas.

The Scan-  
dinavian  
kingdoms

By this time Denmark, Sweden, and Norway had all, in some fashion, been organized as kingdoms. Denmark, as would be expected, was the most advanced, having been Christianized under Harold Blue-Tooth, who was succeeded in 986 by his son Sweyn (Svein) Fork-Beard. In Sweden Christianity was made official under a certain Olaf, who became king in 993; and a ruler by the same name (St. Olaf) carried out the same work in Norway after 1015. Henceforth these countries rapidly yielded to political influences from the south, and the raids of individual vikings were superseded by organized expeditions under the command of kings. To this invasion of foreign custom the Norse were the last to yield. Before 900 many of their bands had already settled in Iceland, and from that base adventurous spirits continued to make voyages of exploration all through the following century. So it was that they discovered Greenland and finally, about 1000, the shore of North America.

The  
Danish  
conquest  
of England  
(1013-16)

Meanwhile, encouraged by the rapid weakening of the monarchy, Danes and Norse again made themselves the scourge of the English coasts. The incompetent Æthelred, to buy them off, impoverished his kingdom by levying a tax on all landowners—the famous Danegeld. This expedient naturally led to increased exaction of blackmail by the raiders, until at last the Danish king, Sweyn, decided to annex the source of supply. As a bid for support against the approaching danger, Æthelred married Emma, daughter of the Norman duke. Then in 1013, after a feeble defense, he abandoned his kingdom to the invader and fled to the continent with his wife and young son. Sweyn, however, did not live to enjoy his conquest. Dying in 1014, he left England to be recovered by his son, Canute (Knut), after the way had been made clear by the death of Æthelred in 1016.

Canute  
(1016-35)

The reign of Canute proved that, instead of the pirate feared by the English, they had obtained a pious, sensible, and statesmanlike king. In addition to the crowns of Denmark and Eng-

land, conquest soon brought him that of Norway; other campaigns extended his dominion over southern Sweden, the Baltic islands, and the coast of what is now Esthonia. Yet Canute's main interest was from the outset England. Anticipating the danger there of Norman intervention, he shrewdly offered marriage to Æthelred's widow; so Emma left her son Edward in Normandy and returned as queen for the second time. To avoid trouble with the Scottish king, Canute ceded to him the territory of Lothian—all of Northumbria between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth. This treaty had two important results: it established the northern boundary of England where it has since remained and it brought the Scottish court into an English-speaking country. In the meantime Canute had given his island kingdom an orderly government based on ancient custom. His only important innovations had to do with defense. It was at this time, apparently, that the Danegeld was turned into a regular tax to maintain the Scandinavian guards known as house-carls—the nucleus of a combined army and navy.

Remarkable as it was, Canute's imperial structure proved to be short-lived. When he died prematurely in 1035, he left no competent successor. Norway regained its independence, and after Canute's two sons had died without heirs, the English magnates broke away from Denmark and gave the crown to Edward the Confessor, son of Æthelred. This king, as his nickname implies, was chiefly noted for his piety. Lacking a strong will of his own, he was constantly led by others. Since he was childless, the great issue came to be which of various rival factions should control the kingdom when he had gained his heavenly reward. For a time the dominant influence was Norman. Having lived in his mother's country until he was nearly forty, Edward came to England virtually a foreigner and brought with him a swarm of French-speaking favorites, who soon held many of the important offices in both church and state. Edward, however, was prevailed on to marry Edith, daughter of Godwin, earl of Wessex and head of a powerful native group opposed to the Normans. Godwin for a time was forced into exile; then, in 1052, he turned the tables on his adversaries and drove most of them out. In the next year the earldom of Wessex was inherited by his son Harold, who thenceforth remained the most influential man at court. His dominance, naturally, was resented

Edward  
the  
Confessor  
(1042-66)

by other nobles, some of whom, as usual, turned for aid to the kings of Denmark and Norway.

Under such circumstances, William, duke of Normandy developed a violent interest in English politics. Although he undoubtedly realized that he had no hereditary title to the English crown, he nevertheless advanced one. And when Earl Harold chanced to visit his shores—perhaps as the result of shipwreck—William seems to have exacted from his guest some sort of engagement to support his claim. If Harold took such an oath, he assuredly failed to keep it, for when Edward died early in 1066, the earl himself accepted election and was formally crowned. Immediately he was threatened by two hostile expeditions: one led by Harold Hardrada, king of Norway, and the other by William, duke of Normandy. The former had the backing of various malcontents in England, including Harold's own brother, Tostig; but William had a more powerful champion in the pope. Some time earlier, under the influence of Godwin, the Norman archbishop of Canterbury had been driven into exile and his successor, an Englishman named Stigand, had never obtained lawful confirmation of his appointment at Rome. He it was who consecrated Harold, and since the two were so closely allied, the pope inevitably gave his blessing to the Norman enterprise, sending a holy banner to be carried by the invading host.<sup>5</sup>

Harold, of course, had warning of William's preparations, and through the summer of 1066 he kept his fleet in the Channel and his army concentrated in the south. Then, early in the autumn, the landing of the Norwegian king forced a diversion to the northward. On September 25 Harold won a great battle at Stamford Bridge, in which Hardrada and Tostig were both slain. Only three days later William landed in Sussex; a favorable wind had brought him to the southern shore at the very moment when it was unguarded. Harold, with an exhausted army supplemented by rural levies, advanced to a hill near Hastings. There the English—all, of course, on foot—stood on the defensive, the house-carls in the first line with overlapping shields. Charging them front and rear, the Norman knights eventually broke their array. Harold fell in the fight, and with him fell the Anglo-Saxon monarchy. The rest of the campaign was a triumphal procession, for there was no one to organize the de-

The  
Battle of  
Hastings  
(October  
14, 1066)

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 314.

fense. Finally the surviving magnates, assembled in London, offered the throne to the Conqueror, who celebrated Christmas by wearing the crown of England.

In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* we have a very famous character sketch of William. He was, says the anonymous author, "a very wise and a great man," but "stern and wrathful"—"severe beyond measure to those who withstood his will." Yet he was "mild to those good men who loved God," and he endowed many noble monasteries. Throughout England he established a firm peace, to the great benefit of all and, incidentally, to his own enrichment. For William was "sharp-sighted to his own interest" and "greedily loved gain." He built many castles and set apart wide forests as hunting preserves, enacting cruel laws against those who took game without license. "He loved the tall stags as if he were their father." "The rich complained and the poor murmured, but he was so sturdy that he recked naught of them; they must will all that the king willed if they would live or keep their lands." Such, indeed, was the Conqueror, as we know not merely from his monkish biographers, but also from his own acts. To explain his policy in England requires no abstruse argument; by combining Norman and Anglo-Saxon customs he sought to make himself as powerful as possible.

The policy  
of the  
Conqueror

Since feudalism afforded the most advanced political structure with which William was familiar, it was made the basis of his new state. In England, before this time, the institution of personal lordship had long been widespread, and occasionally lands had been granted in return for military and other services. There had, however, been no uniform system of feudal tenure such as was now introduced. William proclaimed the revolutionary principle that every bit of English soil was by ultimate title his; all that he did not keep in his own hands formed part of some fief, to be held by its possessor directly or indirectly of the crown. Actually, of course, the establishment of the new principle did not imply that every piece of land changed hands. The mass of the people, the cultivators of the soil, were hardly affected. It was only the members of the aristocracy who were dispossessed in order to provide rewards for William's chief followers. And many ecclesiastical estates remained untouched because they could be given to Normans as soon as the existing holders died. In either case the fiefs consisted of manors, and the recipient, who was styled a tenant-in-chief or baron, was left at his own conven-

The intro-  
duction of  
feudal  
tenure



ience to provide for his retainers by subinfeudation. In fact, all the feudal arrangements described in the preceding chapter were now suddenly, as the result of the Conquest, imposed on England, to remain for centuries the basis of its political and social constitution.

Since even in France many lands had continued to be allodial properties, held in full ownership by virtue of family inheritance or purchase, England became the most completely feudalized kingdom of the contemporary world. William, we may be sure, would never have inaugurated such a régime if feudalism, as stated in many books, had been incompatible with strong monarchy. Many feudal principalities, though produced from a decadent state, were not themselves weak; one of them, Normandy, served as the model for the feudalized kingdom of England. Under the system there established by William, the royal authority was enormously strengthened. The institutions of Norman England will be examined somewhat more carefully in a later chapter. Here a brief summary must serve to indicate the immediate effect of the Conqueror's innovations.

The cen-  
tral gov-  
ernment

After 1066 the central administration of the kingdom was in general Norman—which means that it was essentially feudal. Earlier the king's advisory council had been a loosely organized group of clergy and nobles known as the *witan* (wise men). This body was henceforth supplanted by the *curia regis*, the king's feudal court, which included his barons, or those of them whom he chose to call in. Here justice was administered and other matters decided according to the feudal custom of Normandy. The king, of course, continued to levy the established land tax known as the Danegeld, but along with it he also collected aids and incidents. From his vassals he obtained a feudal army, the superiority of which had been amply demonstrated at Hastings. Each baron, when he received his fief from the Conqueror, was made liable for a certain number of knights, usually five or a multiple of that figure. The total force thus drawn from the land seems hardly to have exceeded 5000; if the king wanted more knights, he had to hire them. In time of necessity, however, he kept the power, justified by both Norman and English precedent, of calling on all able-bodied men without regard for feudal liability.

Castles

Under the Anglo-Saxon monarchy the only great royal strongholds had been the boroughs—old Roman cities and fortified

camp, together with newer constructions made after Roman models. The Normans, on the other hand, immediately covered the land with castles, feudal fortresses of the motte-and-bailey type already perfected in northern France<sup>6</sup> and as yet built of earth and wood. The castle, though it might be intrusted to the keeping of some official, was legally the king's. No baron could lawfully raise a castle without royal license and any that he had were primarily for the defense of the kingdom, not for his private use. In England, as in Normandy, William enforced the rule that no warfare could be indulged in except by his authorization. The ordinary fief was not a compact principality, but a number of scattered manors, taken over as a collection from some Saxon predecessor. It was only on the Welsh and Scottish borders, where fighting was constant, that marches were set up under the control of palatine earls endowed with all regalian rights.

Throughout most of the kingdom the king's authority was directly enforced by constables placed in charge of the royal castles; but this system, imported from Normandy, was superimposed on the Anglo-Saxon local government, much of which was preserved unchanged. Long before 1066 England had been divided for administrative purposes into shires, and these into hundreds. The shires were relatively large units, over each of which was a royal official called a shire-reeve, or sheriff. He acted as the king's judicial, financial, and military agent and presided over the shire court, an infrequent assembly of local magnates for the consideration of exceptional cases. Ordinary trials and other matters of routine were taken care of in the hundred court, which met monthly under the presidency of a hundredman, or reeve. The latter was thus the subordinate of the sheriff, and he, in turn, was sometimes placed under an earl, who held a group of shires as a sort of principality.

The shires and hundreds, with their respective courts, continued after the Norman Conquest without change, except that the shires came to be called counties.<sup>7</sup> So too the earl was now styled a count; yet except on the frontier, he lost all share in the royal administration. The sheriff, on the other hand, was identified with the Norman viscount and so made constable of the

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 260.

<sup>7</sup> "County" remains in English the synonym of "shire," but "count" and "viscount" failed to secure acceptance in place of "earl" and "sheriff."

chief castle in the shire. Thence he carried out the king's will in all matters, holding his office only during the royal pleasure, not as a fief. Much of the law which he helped to enforce was the ancient custom of Saxon England, but this from the outset was considerably modified through the influence of feudal institutions and the establishment by the king of new measures for the maintenance of the peace. While, for example, the older methods of trial by ordeal and compurgation<sup>8</sup> still remained in vogue for the common people, members of the feudal class insisted on their own favorite trial by combat.

Social  
results  
of the  
Norman  
Conquest

The social results of the Norman Conquest were equally significant. After 1066 the aristocracy, consisting of the barons together with their vassals and subvassals, became thoroughly Norman—or rather French, for some two-thirds of William's followers were not actually from his own duchy. French accordingly became the language not only of the court, but of the upper classes generally. And with the language were established all the other customs of northern France, including dress, arms, chivalry, styles of architecture, modes of life, and habits of thought. The civilization of mediæval England thenceforth developed on a solidly French foundation. The church, too, was inevitably brought under the influence of great ecclesiastics trained on the continent—with momentous consequences for both clergy and monarchy. As far as the peasants were concerned, the coming of the Normans resulted primarily in a change of masters, for the manorial system had long dominated a goodly part of the countryside. Before the Conquest the rustic population of England had been divided and subdivided into innumerable groups with peculiar names and even more peculiar degrees of freedom and unfreedom. These distinctions the Normans largely ignored. To them the peasant was a villein and the villein was a serf. Under English law villeinage and serfdom thus became equivalent terms, and thereby the mass of the people came to suffer degradation in legal status, if not in economic condition. As far as the towns were concerned, the French connection began a new epoch, enormously stimulating mercantile activity and with it the advance of burgess privilege.<sup>9</sup>

The Danish Conquest of England, seen in historical perspective, was a mere episode—the brief reign of a foreign king that proved

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 78; below, p. 382.

<sup>9</sup> See below, pp. 357 f.

to have no lasting results. But the more thoroughly we come to understand the Norman Conquest, the greater appears its significance. There was not a phase of English culture and institutions which it left unaffected. That is why it must be ranked as one of the crucial events in the history of Europe.

### 3. THE FEUDAL EPIC

Of all the Germanic languages, Anglo-Saxon was the first to develop a variety of perfected literary forms. As early as the sixth century we find portions of the customary law beginning to be written down in what are called dooms.<sup>10</sup> The great period of Anglo-Saxon literature, however, opened with the reign of Alfred. That king, appreciating the catastrophe that had befallen Northumbrian culture at the hands of the Danes, devoted much energy to the restoration of learning in Britain. There were of course many scholars under Alfred and his successors who wrote in Latin, but the more interesting works are those composed in the vernacular. Alongside a greatly expanded series of dooms now appears the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the first great original composition in Germanic prose. Briefly reviewing the traditional history of the earlier centuries, it tells with dramatic fullness the story of Alfred's conflict with the Danes and, continued by many hands, covers the whole succeeding period down into the twelfth century.

Anglo-Saxon literature

Alfred also commissioned various translations from the Latin, of which the most famous is the Anglo-Saxon version of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*. Meanwhile, a good many remarkable poems had come to be composed in the vernacular: some, like those of Ælfric, dealing with religious subjects, some rather with war and adventure. Within this latter group may be mentioned the brilliant song of triumph to celebrate Æthelstan's victory at Brunanburh,<sup>11</sup> which is inserted in the *Chronicle*, and the magnificent piece on the battle of Maldon where the alderman Byrhtnoth was slain by the viking Anlaf in 991. Of more direct interest to us in the present connection is the celebrated poem, *Beowulf*. Although in its existing form the composition cannot be dated before the eighth century, it unquestionably contains elements that go back to a very primitive age. Many of the characters are

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 245.

known to have been real persons who lived in the early sixth century, and their alleged exploits are combined with legendary material that must be even older. The great fight with the sea monster Grendel, in particular, would seem to be a bit of very ancient folklore which originally had no association with the deeds of one Beowulf. At any rate, the scene of the action is laid in Denmark, and the framework of the story, though overlaid with Christian adornment, is essentially heathen.

The north-  
ern saga Not only from internal evidence, but from extant writings in other languages, we may be sure that the core of *Beowulf* was some sort of saga—one of the many heroic tales that constituted a common stock at one time shared by all the Germanic peoples of the Baltic region. In German itself almost nothing remains of what must have been a rich oral literature. We have one ninth-century fragment, the *Hildebrandslied*, composed in the continental Saxon dialect. The *Waltharilied* exists only in a Latin version by a tenth-century monk named Ekkehard. The more famous *Nibelungenlied*, familiarized by Wagnerian opera, is a comparatively late adaptation made in Austria under the influence of romantic chivalry somewhere toward the year 1200. Like *Beowulf*, it combines a legendary story of the supernatural—in this case, of a magic treasure guarded by a dragon—with the imaginary deeds of actual historical characters. Here we encounter, though hidden under fanciful disguises, Attila the Hun, Theodoric the Ostrogoth, and the members of the Burgundian court at Worms.

Strangely enough, the older form of this saga, quite unconnected with events of the fifth century, is found in an Icelandic collection called the *Edda*. Here the tale appears as the *Volungasaga*, but this itself proves to be a prose version of a poetic original, known through an older collection of the twelfth century. The Norse, it would seem, took the ancient sagas of their homeland to Iceland, where, in a primitive environment, they were hardly affected by subsequent literary developments on the continent. Through them, consequently, we secure vivid glimpses of the beliefs and habits of the old heathen Scandinavia. These sagas, however, are not all based on mythological themes; some tell of actual viking expeditions and so furnish us with valuable information to supplement the meager reports of Christian annalists.

As may readily be appreciated, the scattered remains of ancient Germanic literature offer fascinating but enormously difficult problems of criticism. The task of separating the truly primitive from the accretions of all the later centuries is one that demands the attention of an expert—and experts often arrive at widely different conclusions. From the isolated pieces that survive, it appears that the original saga was a heroic poem to be chanted by a minstrel. It was composed in a simple and forceful meter which suited the accompaniment of chords struck on a harp, and which made it easy to remember. In such a poem the thoughts and feelings of the individual author are of no significance. Interest is concentrated on the tale itself, which is dramatic and intensely serious, telling of famous adventures and expressing lofty ideals. Poetry of this sort is called epic and is recognized as characteristic of a peculiar stage in cultural development—such as that of Homeric Greece or of early mediæval Europe.

The  
character  
of epic

Some of the Icelandic sagas are magnificent epics, and *Beowulf*, though lacking unity in its present form, is made up of true epic elements. These poems, great as they are, stood apart from the main current of European civilization. The epics that more faithfully reflect what we know as mediæval culture were the *chansons de geste*—as the name literally implies, songs of great deeds. Presumably the early Franks had shared the common stock of Germanic sagas,<sup>12</sup> but what influence they had on the subsequent literature is a matter of guesswork, for none of them have survived. The *chansons de geste* are very different from such poems as *Beowulf* or those of the Icelandic collections. The epics of France are written in the *lingua romana*, that is to say, in French. Their heroes are usually Franks of the Carolingian court. The society which they take for granted is thoroughly feudal. Scholarly opinion is now inclined to consider them unified compositions of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, rather than ancient sagas which grew during a long period. Quite valueless for the earlier age, they give us a splendid picture of that in which they were sung.

The  
*chansons  
de geste*

In the present connection the *chansons de geste* are especially valuable because they vividly reflect the spirit of feudal adventure. Here, as in no other group of sources, are revealed the habits and aspirations of the French aristocracy that led all Eu-

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 228.

rope in knightly prowess. One example must suffice, and that will of course be the *Song of Roland*, the earliest and best of the *chansons*, and one of the finest things in all literature. Critics are still disputing whether it was composed before or after the crusade of 1095; that question is for our purpose of secondary importance. Nor need we worry as to whether the author's name was Turolde or something else. He seems to have been a Norman clerk who, about the year 1100, wrote under the combined inspiration of Carolingian legend and contemporary events in Spain. The meter of the poem, like its language, is simple, having five stressed syllables to the line, with a pause usually falling after the second. There is no rhyme, but instead a rude assonance, by which the final syllables throughout a group of lines have the same vowel sound.<sup>13</sup>

The  
*Chanson*  
*de Roland*

The *chanson* starts by introducing Charlemagne who, we are told, has spent seven years in Spain and has subdued the entire peninsula except Saragossa. Marsile, king of that city, "who serves Mohammed and prays to Apollo," holds a council of war. There it is decided to send an embassy to the emperor, offering rich presents and treacherous terms of peace. Charlemagne, on receiving this offer, takes a seat under a pine tree and summons his barons for advice. They are very distrustful of Marsile, and Count Roland, the emperor's nephew, voices their sentiment in urging further war. Ganelon, however, persuades Charles to accept, and the question then arises as to who shall make the perilous journey with the answer. The emperor refuses to allow either Roland or his friend Oliver to go, but agrees to send Ganelon. The latter, furious with jealousy, swears revenge on Roland. Thus it comes about that Ganelon turns traitor and joins Marsile in an attack on the Frankish rear guard, left under command of Roland.

Roland  
and  
Oliver

Charlemagne and his host have advanced out of Spain. Roland, with a picked force of twenty-thousand knights, remains behind in the pass of Roncevaux. Oliver, full of foreboding, climbs a hill and so perceives the Saracen army preparing for attack. It is a magnificent sight.

<sup>13</sup> The following quotations are from C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, *The Song of Roland* (Chapman & Hall, Ltd.: London, 1920), and are used by permission of the publishers. The translator very happily reproduces the meter and to some extent the assonance of the original. Wherever necessary, the English words must be given an archaic pronunciation to suit the rhythm.

Fair shines the sun, the day is bright and clear,  
 Light burns again from all their polished gear.  
 A thousand horns they sound, more proud to seem;  
 Great is the noise, the Franks its echo hear.  
 Says Oliver: "Companion, I believe,  
 Sarrazins now in battle must we meet."  
 Answers Rollanz: "God grant us then the fee!  
 For our King's sake well must we quit us here;  
 Man for his lord should suffer great disease,  
 Most bitter cold endure, and burning heat,  
 His hair and skin should offer up at need.  
 Now must we each lay on most hardily,  
 So evil song ne'er sung of us shall be."

"Roland is gallant; Oliver is wise." Oliver urges Roland to sound his horn, by a miraculous blast to summon Charles to the rescue. But Roland refuses all entreaty and prepares for combat, thinking only of glorious battle and of the bright blood that shall soon paint his beloved sword, Durendal. If he is to die, he hopes only that the man who gets it may be able to say that it belonged to a "noble vassal."

Up rides the archbishop Turpin and preaches the Franks a sermon, brief and to the point:

"My lords barons, Charles left us here for this;  
 He is our King, well may we die for him:  
 To Christendom good service offering.  
 Battle you'll have, you all are bound to it,  
 For with your eyes you see the Sarrazins.  
 Pray for God's grace, confessing Him your sins!  
 For your souls' health, I'll absolution give;  
 So, though you die, blest martyrs shall you live,  
 Thrones you shall win in the great Paradis."

The Franks arise, and stand upon their feet;  
 They're well absolved, and from their sins made clean,  
 And the Archbishop has signed them with God's seal.

So Roland now leads his troops to battle, galloping on Veillantif, his good horse. Proud and brave he goes, brandishing his sword and turning against the sky the point of his lance, from which streams a white pennon. Fringes beat his hands as he rides, noble of body, with face clear and smiling. And what does he



say to his companions? "Lords, before night great and rich booty shall be ours!"

The battle is joined—a series of combats, man to man, lance against shield. After fifteen strokes, Roland's lance breaks and he draws Durendal. Striking the first-comer, one Chernuble, he cuts through helmet, man, saddle, and horse, slicing the spine "without striking a joint."

The count Rollanz, he canters through the field,  
Holds Durendal, he well can trust and wield,  
Right great damage he's done the Sarrazines,  
You'd seen them, one on other, dead in heaps,  
Through all that place their blood was flowing clear!  
In blood his arms were and his hauberk steeped,  
And bloodied o'er, shoulder and neck, his steed.

The fight becomes fiercer. Both Frank and Saracen strike marvelous blows, but the mightiest strikers are Roland, Oliver, and Turpin.

The Franks strike on; their hearts are good and stout.  
Pagans are slain, a thousandfold, in crowds,  
Left of five score are not two thousands now.  
Says the Archbishop: "Our men are very proud,  
No man on earth has more nor better found.  
In Chronicles of Franks is written down,  
What vassalage he had, our Emperour.

The archbishop has a splendid horse, taken from a Danish king whom he had slain. He has a magnificent sword, equaled apparently only by his right arm. He rides against Abisme and cuts right through his magic shield.

So Turpin strikes, spares him not anyway;  
After that blow, he's worth no penny wage;  
The carcass he's sliced, rib from rib away,  
So flings him down dead in an empty place.  
Then say the Franks: "He has great vassalage,  
With the Archbishop, surely the cross is safe."

The end The Franks, however, are sorely outnumbered. Before long very few will be left. So Roland, still unscathed by the enemy, sounds his horn—a mighty blast that starts the blood from his lips and cracks his temple. Charlemagne, distant thirty leagues, hears, summons his troops, and turns back. Too late! By the

time that the Saracens, hearing the approach of reinforcements, have fled, all the Franks are doomed. Oliver has died, breathing a last prayer for his emperor, France, and "above all men Roland, his companion." The archbishop is able only to pronounce a last blessing over the slain nobles laid before him by Roland. The latter, weakened by loss of blood, faints on finding the body of Oliver, and Turpin dies in the effort to bring him water.

Roland, thus left with an army of corpses, feels death approaching. Rather than have his sword Durendal, with all the sacred relics in the hilt, fall into pagan hands, he tries to break it, but cannot. As his strength fails, he throws himself under a pine, his face toward the enemy.

His right-hand glove, to God he offers it;  
 Saint Gabriel from's hand hath taken it.  
 Over his arm his head bows down and slips,  
 He joins his hands: and so is life finish'd.  
 God sent him down His angel cherubin,  
 And Saint Michael, we worship in peril;  
 And by their side Saint Gabriel alit;  
 So the count's soul they bare to Paradis.

More battles ensue—battles of revenge, in which the Franks decimate the Saracens and complete their conquest. Then comes the journey homeward. At the imperial palace in Aix-la-Chapelle Charlemagne is confronted by Aude the fair, betrothed of Roland. He tells her not to grieve; that she may have instead his own son Louis. Aude replies that without Roland life is not worth living, and she falls dead at the emperor's feet. Ganelon, after his guilt has been determined through trial by combat, is executed. Charlemagne lies down to sleep, but St. Gabriel appears to him in a vision and tells him of more Christians to be rescued from pagan oppression.

"God!" said the king: "My life is hard indeed!"  
 Tears filled his eyes, he tore his snowy beard.

This is the *Song of Roland*, the fame of which was spread by French knights from Ireland to Jerusalem. Wherever feudal  
 Epic  
 ideals came to triumph, there men thrilled at the bitter fight  
 chivalry  
 at Roncevaux. Reading the *chanson* today, we can understand, if we cannot share, their emotions; for through the song we plainly know the singer and his audience. In the background of the poem are Charlemagne, a majestic but shadowy figure;

France, his empire, with a geography of the vaguest; and the weary, ceaseless war against the infidel. The real theme, however, is vassalage, epitomized in the person of Count Roland. Charles is not merely king and champion of the faith; he is Roland's lord. To Charles Roland is unswervingly loyal, yet his loyalty is not disinterested. Fighting for his lord, Roland also fights for himself—for conquest, loot, glory, and sheer delight. It is on his reckless valor, not the wisdom of Oliver, that the story turns. Like a true knight, he is straightforward; the schemers of the piece are rogues. Ruthless to his foes, Roland is tender to his friends. Nearest his heart stands his devoted companion-in-arms, Oliver; and next in his affections come his war horse and his sword. Of love for woman there is no word. His *fiancée* dies at the news of his death; that is all. Roland's virtues are those of the battlefield. Even the religion of the *chanson* is warlike: magic relics help to make a sword invincible; the Cross is safest with a blood-smeared archbishop; a soldier on God's side is assured of salvation; warrior saints bear Roland's soul to paradise.

To conclude that the French of the eleventh century thought no thought not contained in this one poem would of course be erroneous. Most men at that time probably loved their wives and sweethearts, took delight in humble joys, lived ordinary lives, and missed heroic deaths. Vassals were not always loyal to their lords, nor lords to their vassals. Yet, although men could not be Rolands, they could dream of being so. The glorious count could have been the paragon of none but the fiercely warlike and naïvely religious aristocracy that spent itself on the crusade.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EMPIRE AND THE PAPACY

#### I. THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

IN AN earlier chapter the subject of the German monarchy was dropped at the accession to the throne of Otto I. His father, Henry the Fowler, the first of the Saxon dukes to wear the crown, had proved himself a wise ruler as well as a good soldier. To the son elected to succeed him, however, he bequeathed a series of difficult problems. On the western frontier Henry's seizure of Lorraine could not fail to produce further hostilities with the kings of the West Franks. On the eastern frontier the Slavic and Hungarian hordes were still threatening. And internally no cure had as yet been found for the chronic disorder that had long prevailed in both church and state. If Germany were to be more than a theoretic kingdom like Italy, the monarchy would have to be enormously strengthened. England, during these same years, was being created under the successors of Alfred; but it was a relatively small country. In contemporary France all effective power had slipped into the hands of the feudal princes. Could Otto check the similar disintegration that had already gone far in the eastern kingdom?

Otto the  
Great  
(936-73)

At the royal coronation of 936 the archbishop of Mainz officiated, and he was assisted by the archbishop of Cologne. Then, at the state banquet, the dukes of Lorraine, Franconia, Suabia, and Bavaria acted respectively as chamberlain, steward, cupbearer, and marshal. This, of course, was a mere repetition of the Roman forms that had been preserved under the Carolingians; the dukes had no intention of ever being actual servants to the king. They were quite willing to accord him royal honors, but as far as real power was concerned, they expected him to remain merely duke of Saxony, allowing them to be virtually kings in their respective territories. Otto soon proved that his ambitions were infinitely greater. He proposed, as a true heir of Charlemagne, to be master of the entire country. The management of Saxon affairs he intrusted to two loyal margraves: Gero, who commanded the so-called North Mark on the Elbe, and Hermann Billung, whose province lay between that river and the Baltic. Being

thus relieved of local cares, he turned to the energetic enforcement of his authority throughout Germany as a whole. The inevitable result was a far-reaching insurrection of the princes.

Redis-  
tribution  
of the  
duchies

The trouble began in Bavaria when, after the death of the duke, his sons refused homage to the king. Later the disaffection spread into Franconia, Lorraine, and even Saxony, where Otto's brother Henry headed a group of jealous nobles. The archbishop of Mainz made common cause with the rebels, and Louis IV of France took advantage of the situation to attempt the reconquest of the Rhinelands. Fortunately for Otto, however, the risings did not all take place at once. Sooner or later they were put down and royal control was established in every duchy. Otto kept Franconia under his own rule; Lorraine he gave to a certain Conrad the Red, soon to become his son-in-law; while his brother Henry, having now submitted and received pardon, became duke of Bavaria. Finally, on the death of the Suabian duke, that principality was conferred on Otto's son, Liudolf. By 950 the king had thus reasserted the principle that the dukedoms were offices in the grant of the monarchy; and by keeping them all within the royal house, he sought to prevent a repetition of the earlier disorders. As a further check on local administration, counts palatine<sup>1</sup>—somewhat like the *missi* of Charlemagne—were established at strategic points to report directly to the king.

Territorial  
expansion

On all sides, meanwhile, victorious wars were fought against the enemies of Germany. To the west Otto, by supporting first the Carolingian and then the Parisian cause, maintained a firm hold on Lorraine. To the north the Danes were driven back and a new march, Schleswig, was set up against them. To the east the Saxons, under Hermann Billung and Gero, carried on a successful offensive against the Slavs, gradually occupying the lands between the Elbe and the Oder and organizing them about *burgen* like those of Henry the Fowler. The more serious campaign against the Bohemians was undertaken by the king himself. That people, Christianized in the previous century, now appeared as a formidable power under their duke, Boleslav, who extended his dominions to include the modern Silesia, as well as the whole of Moravia. So it was not an inconsiderable triumph when Otto forced him, about 950, to recognize German overlordship and pay annual tribute. By this time the ambitious king had also

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, counts attached to the service of the palace. In the later centuries the title lost all particular significance.

been induced to launch projects of far-reaching importance to the south.

In the later ninth century the territorial inheritance of Lothair, eldest son of Louis the Pious, had broken into four kingdoms. Of these Lorraine was absorbed by Germany, but three others persisted into the tenth century: Italy, Provence, and Burgundy. The crown of Italy, after being secured for a time by the German Arnulf, had passed to various Italians.<sup>2</sup> In 900 it was held by Berengar of Friuli, and to counteract his authority, the local nobility now appealed to the rulers of the little kingdoms beyond the Alps, especially Provence and Burgundy. The complicated events of the next fifty years need not detain us. A series of murders and petty wars served merely to enhance the prestige of the German king. In 937 the combined kingdoms of Burgundy and Provence, henceforth known as the kingdom of Arles, fell to a boy named Conrad. Otto, anticipating the aggression of other neighbors, took Conrad under his protection; kept him, in fact, a sort of captive guest and released him only after he had recognized German overlordship. In the meantime Conrad's sister, Adelaide, had been married to one of two rivals for the throne of Italy. On the death of her husband, she was imprisoned by his enemy. The dukes of Suabia and Bavaria both showed an interest in her fate, but it was again Otto who took the decisive step. Crossing the Alps in 951, he forced the Italian king to acknowledge him as lord, rescued the fair Adelaide, and, being now a widower, married her.

Burgundy  
and Italy

Remembering the precedents established by Charles the Fat and Arnulf, we can hardly escape the conclusion that Otto's aggressive policy was leading straight toward the assumption of the imperial title. Momentarily, however, any such ambition had to be dropped, for in 953 he was faced with a great insurrection that proved the utter inadequacy of family control for the duchies. The ringleaders were his son and his son-in-law, dukes, respectively, of Suabia and Lorraine. They were joined by the archbishop of Mainz and a host of malcontents throughout the country. Otto's other son, Henry of Bavaria, remained loyal, but a large section of his subjects, led by the local count palatine, raised the standard of revolt. To cap the climax, the Hungarians renewed their raiding in 954, spreading terror across Franconia and

Insurrec-  
tion and  
invasion  
(953-55)

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 242.

into the Rhinelands. Yet Otto, after many critical days, was able to reassert his mastery. The rebels were all compelled to submit, and in 955 the king won a crowning victory over the Hungarians on the Lech near Augsburg—a decisive battle, for it ended the last great Magyar invasion of Germany. Meanwhile the duchies of Bavaria and Lorraine had been given to more reliable holders, and the troublesome archbishop of Mainz had died. By 961 all was again quiet and Otto found himself free to resume the Italian project.

The  
revival  
of the  
empire  
(962)

After the brief German intervention of ten years before, the peninsula had reverted to its chronic anarchy. The pope was now the profligate John XII,<sup>3</sup> concerned only with the maintenance of his Roman principality. Like his predecessor Formosus, he became involved in conflict with the Italian king and appealed to Germany for aid. Otto responded promptly. Advancing over the Alps with a formidable army in 961, he assumed the crown of Italy himself, and early in the next year received that of the empire from the hands of the pope. The latter, however, soon changed sides and fomented an insurrection at Rome. So in 963 Otto took the city by assault; John was deposed by a synod of complaisant clergy, and the emperor's own secretary was installed in his place. After two more campaigns to assure imperial control of the papacy, Otto attempted the conquest of the southern peninsula, but abandoned the project in favor of a treaty with the Byzantine emperor. Thereby he secured the hand of the princess Theophano<sup>4</sup> for his eldest son, Otto, together with the expectation of the southern Italian duchies as her dowry.

Ecclesi-  
astical  
reforms

Otto's dominance at Rome enabled him to carry out another measure that lay next his heart—the ecclesiastical reorganization of the Slavic borderland. Hitherto the entire region from the Baltic to the Danube Valley had belonged to the province of Mainz. By this time, however, the Germanization of the Slavic marches had progressed far enough to warrant the creation of many new bishoprics, such as those of Brandenburg, Merseburg, Meissen, and Zeitz. They were now combined under a newly established metropolitan at Magdeburg. Like their brethren to the west, the bishops and abbots of this eastern country were loaded with immunities that made them peers of the lay princes. While placing men of his own over all the duchies, Otto very

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 322.

naturally took every opportunity to install loyal prelates in the church, and in this work he enjoyed the zealous collaboration of his youngest brother, Bruno, archbishop of Cologne. The latter, in particular, devoted himself to a restoration of learning, which German scholars often refer to as the Ottonian Renaissance.

In this respect, as in all others, Otto unquestionably deserved the title of Great which has been accorded him in history. His reign cannot be passed over by one who hopes to understand the subsequent development of central Europe. A man, obviously, of magnificent energy and personal force, Otto seemed able to accomplish any task to which he set his hand. He was the creator of what later generations called the Holy Roman Empire; and to him, as it had been to Charlemagne, it was both holy and Roman. Indeed, all of Otto's many achievements can be readily seen to have been inspired by the example of the illustrious Frank—his method of government, his conquests, his Christianization of the heathen, his seizure of Italy, his domination of the papacy, and his reform of education. It has been argued that Otto's assumption of the imperial title was principally dictated by his desire to control the church, and so to strengthen the German monarchy. Although this motive should not be overlooked, Otto's imperialism seems on the whole an inseparable part of the Carolingian tradition to which he devoted his life. He merely revived and extended the policy of Arnulf. We can hardly doubt that he would also have taken the western kingdom if he had seen any way of getting it.

The significance of Otto's imperial policy

As it was, his dominions were too vast to be efficiently administered. Where the Carolingians had failed, the Saxons could hardly be expected to succeed. Had he concentrated his attention on his original kingdom, and had his dynasty remained loyal to the same policy, it is possible that Germany might have been welded into a solid political structure. Saxony, at any rate, could have been made the nucleus of a powerful state with infinite possibilities of expansion to the east, or perhaps to the north; for as yet there were no Scandinavian kingdoms of any strength. But Otto chose to abandon Saxony and to attempt the government of Germany through personal control of the dukes, while he followed imperial ambitions into Burgundy and Italy. It is unfair, as some modern writers have done, to condemn him as unpatriotic; in those days there was no such thing as national patriotism. Yet Otto's policy was to prove the bane of his succes-



sors for the next three centuries. Among them few were to realize that the pseudo-imperial connection of Germany and Italy could bring only grief to both countries.

Otto II  
(973-83)

The reign of the first Saxon emperor has been examined in some detail because it was he who established the precedents that governed the fortunes of Germany for a long time to come. The same consideration will justify a very cursory survey of the four subsequent reigns. In 973 Otto I was succeeded by his eighteen-year-old son, Otto II, who had already been crowned king and emperor several years previously. The latter part of his father's life had been largely spent in Italy; Otto II was diverted even further from German interests through the influence of his Byzantine wife. Nevertheless, it was the northern kingdom that first demanded his attention. A revolt of Henry the Wrangler, duke of Bavaria (see Table IV), in alliance with Boleslav of Bohemia, was completely suppressed only after five years had elapsed. Then Otto had to deal with a similar affair in Lorraine, actively supported by Lothair, the Carolingian king of France. Finally, in 980, the emperor found himself free to launch his own pet project—the conquest of southern Italy, which he claimed as unpaid dowry from the Byzantine Empire. There he failed to take into account the strength of the Saracens, who utterly destroyed his army in 982; and before he could recoup his fortunes, he died of fever, leaving only an infant son.

Otto III  
(983-1002)  
and Sil-  
vester II  
(999-1003)

The accession of the three-year-old Otto III, though confirming the hereditary claim of the Saxon house, naturally produced a revival of the old disorders in Germany. The regency of the Greek Theophano was immediately opposed by Henry the Wrangler, who had earlier lost his dukedom, and by Lothair of France, who still fixed covetous eyes on Lorraine. But after Henry had been reinstated in Bavaria, the troubles in eastern Germany, except for border wars with the Slavs, generally subsided. On the west Otto's cause was saved by a loyal party in Lorraine, which had the support of Hugh Capet, count of Paris. The decisive event in this connection was Hugh's election to the French throne in 987,<sup>5</sup> which was largely engineered in the imperial interest by Adalbero, archbishop of Reims. Theophano died in 991, and after three more years of tutelage under a council of regency, Otto assumed personal control of the government. Almost his

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 248.

first act was to cross the Alps in order to secure the imperial crown. He was then only sixteen, and since he died before he was twenty-three, much could not be expected of his reign.

From infancy Otto III, under the teaching of his mother, had been greatly impressed with the sacrosanct character of his imperial office. His earliest tutors had been Greeks and Italians; as an adolescent, his closest friend and adviser was a schoolmaster, the remarkable Gerbert. The latter was by birth an Aquitanian, who began his studies in a monastery at Aurillac and later passed some little time in the county of Barcelona. Through this Spanish connection he seems to have gained a smattering of Arabic science; at any rate, he is found, in the last quarter of the tenth century, especially famous for proficiency in mathematics, astronomy, and music.<sup>6</sup> For the moment it is only his public career that is of concern. Continuing work in dialectic at Reims, Gerbert was made head of the cathedral school by Archbishop Adalbero and became also his trusted assistant in political matters. Being a warm devotee of the imperial cause, as well as a renowned scholar, Gerbert was then appointed instructor to the young Otto III and, under his patronage, rose to be successively archbishop of Reims, archbishop of Ravenna, and finally Pope Silvester II.

For the first time in many generations, the western church thus came to be led by a man of splendid character and ability, who furthermore enjoyed the unique advantage of largely dominating the emperor. Both Gerbert and Otto were charmed by the Carolingian tradition of intimate union between church and state. Together they strove to carry out a very idealistic program of reform, under which the empire would have been a sort of universal lordship entirely independent of the German kingship. But this program was destined to remain a matter of theory. Otto's passion for imperial grandeur far exceeded anything that his more sensible friend, the pope, could have advised. He built a palace on the Aventine at Rome, where, surrounded by *logothetes* and other officials with Greek titles, he aped Byzantine ceremonial and issued fanciful documents in high-flown language. The substitution of such play-acting for the old-fashioned work of royalty naturally disgusted his German subjects and encouraged a host of rivals to defy his authority. Nor was Otto's devotion to Italy

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<sup>6</sup> See below, pp. 415 f.

reciprocated by the Italians. When stricken by fatal illness, he was actually being besieged in his palace by an army of Roman rebels. The net result of his tragic reign was to discredit the proud monarchy of his grandfather. That it was not permanently ruined was due to the wisdom of his successor, Henry II.

Henry II  
(1002-24)

The man proclaimed king in 1002 owed his election primarily to his descent, being the son of Henry the Wrangler and so the great-grandson of Henry the Fowler. His reign of twenty-two years was not spectacular, but it was a distinct success compared with that of his predecessor. Reviving the policy of Otto the Great, Henry II gave his chief attention to Germany, where by moderation and unflagging industry he largely counteracted the disaffection that had been widely prevalent. Although chronic difficulties with the dukes and the great ecclesiastics still continued, there were no very serious outbreaks, and eventually the king found opportunity to pursue a number of projects beyond the German frontiers. To the east the Poles had suddenly emerged as a powerful nation under a Christian king named Boleslav. Having conquered Bohemia, he launched a great counter-offensive against the Germans. Before the new Slavic attack the Saxon defense collapsed, and virtually the whole region between the Elbe and the Oder was laid waste. After a long war, Henry II was able to restore the independence of Bohemia and to compel Boleslav to become his vassal. This relationship, however, gave the Germans no real authority in Poland, and the marches were not recolonized for another century. In Burgundy, too, Henry enjoyed only a theoretical overlordship. He made three expeditions across the Alps and secured the imperial crown; yet, on his death in 1024, Italy was as far from being a true state as ever, and the papacy had suffered another relapse into helpless corruption.

Conrad II  
(1024-39)

With Henry II the house of Saxony, by descent on the male side, died out; but the German magnates, remaining loyal to the dynastic principle, chose a Franconian noble named Conrad, great-grandson of Conrad the Red, son-in-law of Otto I (see Table IV). So the new line of kings, known as the Salian or Franconian house, was merely the continuation of the old. There was no innovation either in theory or in practice. In fact, Conrad's reign was little more than a continuation of Henry's. The new king put down revolts in Suabia and Lorraine, spent a year in Italy, secured the imperial crown, fought the Slavs, and reasserted

German overlordship in Poland and Bohemia. The outstanding event of his reign came in 1032, when the last king of Arles died without heirs. Conrad immediately acted to enforce the sovereignty established over that country by Otto I. A rival claimant, Odo of Blois,<sup>7</sup> was driven out and Conrad added a fourth crown to his collection. Henceforth the Holy Roman Empire was held to contain three kingdoms: Germany, Italy, and Burgundy. It was indeed a glittering inheritance that passed to Henry III in 1039. How insubstantial it was to prove will be seen when we come to examine the later fortunes of the Franconian dynasty.

## 2. THE MOVEMENT FOR ECCLESIASTICAL REFORM

As the establishment of the Carolingian Empire had carried with it a great ecclesiastical reform, so the decay of that empire had naturally produced a relapse into conditions that had prevailed during the Merovingian age. There were, of course, exceptions. Wherever an especially able prince succeeded in creating an orderly state, monasteries might continue to flourish and bishops might still provide examples of true piety—for instance, in England under the descendants of Alfred and in Germany under the Saxon dynasty. But in all such cases the improvement was due rather to the wisdom of the ruler than to the inherent strength of the ecclesiastical system. Throughout the wide regions subjected to foreign invasion and torn by civil warfare the local churches were powerless to reform themselves. In most religious houses, particularly in those given to lay abbots, the ancient discipline had utterly collapsed and the brethren lived as they pleased from the proceeds of the monastic endowments. Most bishops were entirely submerged in secular activities and were frequently as vicious as their non-clerical associates. And in this respect, as we have seen, the popes were often no better than the rest.

The church in the tenth century

Naturally all zealous Christians realized that conditions had become intolerably bad throughout the church at large; some few of them were intelligent enough to see that one chief cause of the disorder lay in the contemporary organization of society. Along with the state, the church had tended to become feudalized. Ecclesiastical properties and offices had in general been turned into fiefs, to be secured by the methods that were everywhere in vogue among laymen. On all sides bishoprics, abbeys, parishes,

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 276.

and other preferments were solicited from patrons by means of suitable presents. The successful candidate, as a matter of course, recouped himself from his subordinates. Bishops charged priests for ordination, and the priests took fees from the people for the administration of other sacraments. The rule of celibacy long asserted by the Roman church above the grade of subdeacon was everywhere relaxed. Priests and even bishops were commonly married, and so came to endow their children with estates that were supposed to be used for the maintenance of religious service. The church, like the Carolingian Empire, was threatened with dispersion among a host of feudal dynasties.

The con-  
gregation  
of Cluny

At the opening of the tenth century most persons took these practices quite for granted. Only occasional purists denounced the marriage of priests as concubinage on the ground that they could not be lawfully wedded, and the buying of ecclesiastical preferment as simony—i.e., the sin of Simon Magus, who had offered money for the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> Such agitation, as we should expect, first gained significant headway in the cloister. Benedictine monasticism had earlier supplied the impetus of the Carolingian reform; now it was to lead a great movement to renew that reform and to amplify it. Long before the alleged mystic year 1000, various religious establishments had become famous as centers of zeal for a Christian revival, but only one of them was destined to achieve European prominence. This was the illustrious abbey of Cluny, established in 910 by William I, duke of Aquitaine. By the terms of his foundation charter, soon confirmed by the pope, the little village of Cluny, situated near Mâcon in Burgundy, was to be the exclusive property of the monastery there erected. The monks should live according to the rule of St. Benedict, and they were specifically authorized to choose as abbot whom they pleased, without the intervention of the duke or of any other authority. They were to be subject only to the Roman pontiff.

From the outset, therefore, Cluny stood for ecclesiastical independence of lay control and for the exaltation of the papal power. Under a series of remarkable abbots, Cluny became the center of a powerful organization pledged to extend these principles among all the monasteries of the west. The original Benedictine system, by which each house was autonomous under its own elected head,

<sup>8</sup> See *Acts*, viii, 18.

had all too often resulted in subjection to some local chieftain and the decadence of religious life. Now, as the new community became widely renowned for purity and zeal, many ancient monasteries asked to become affiliated with it, submitting to the rule of priors named by the abbot of Cluny. Thus arose the Cluniac Congregation, which eventually came to include over three hundred separate houses reaching from Poland to the British Isles. The man chiefly responsible for this development was Odilo, abbot from 994 to 1049. Outliving three emperors and a dozen popes, he remained a commanding figure in Europe throughout the religious revival of the early eleventh century. And to a large degree it was he who supplied the moral leadership that men had ceased to find at Rome.

Cluny may therefore be considered the most potent factor in the movement for reform that later came to be championed by the papacy. This is not to interpret the whole movement as a Cluniac enterprise. The Congregation of Cluny by no means included all the purified houses of the eleventh century; although many reforming organizations of the age owed their dominant inspiration to the Burgundian abbey, there were others that had a quite independent origin. The Cluniac order was always fundamentally French; outside France it extended chiefly into those regions where French influence was dominant—Norman England, Spain, western Germany, and the Burgundian kingdom. The only real interest of the Cluniacs was monastic; they sought to restore religion in the Benedictine houses, not to remodel church and state in all Europe. Following the modified discipline that had become customary under the Carolingians, they allowed manual labor to be supplanted by increased “offices,” so that the brothers’ time was almost wholly taken up with divine service. Nor did they emphasize learning beyond the minimum necessary for practical purposes. Cluny produced a host of great preachers, statesmen, and reformers, but few scholars.

Church  
and state  
in the  
early  
eleventh  
century

Without temporal support, even the Cluniacs could accomplish little, and the first half of the eleventh century was singularly lacking in great political figures. After Silvester II there were no more outstanding popes; and aside from Canute of England and Denmark, the western monarchies had no very important kings. The German sovereigns consequently towered over their contemporaries in truly imperial grandeur; as the successors of Charlemagne, they would naturally be expected to assume the

initiative in any work of ecclesiastical reform. Following the example of Otto I, they had, indeed, appointed many worthy prelates; but in general their interest was political rather than religious. They wanted loyal bishops and abbots to serve as a counterpoise to the lay nobles, whose hereditary status made them perpetually unruly. For this reason the Saxon kings had loaded the ecclesiastical princes with land and privileges. The typical German bishop of the eleventh century was more of a count than a shepherd of souls, and the typical abbot was less concerned with the rule of St. Benedict than with the defense and administration of his fortified estate. The emperors had discountenanced the graver scandals that troubled the church; yet they had taken no vigorous stand against the marriage of the clergy and had continued to accept the usual offerings of candidates for all sorts of offices.

Henry III  
(1039-56)

The first emperor to take to heart the teachings of the reformers on these points was Henry III, who succeeded his father Conrad in 1039. He proceeded immediately to purify his court from all taint of simony and to enforce the rule that no son of a clergyman could hold any honor under the crown. But Henry III never dreamed of relinquishing in any degree his control of ecclesiastical affairs. Like Charlemagne, he regarded the church as one department of the royal government, and by his official acts he soon demonstrated that in this respect no distinction was to be made between Germany and Italy. After establishing or reestablishing overlordship in Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary, and after enforcing a new political settlement in Lorraine, he proceeded to Italy in 1046. By that time the Romans were enjoying the unusual spectacle of three rivals, all claiming to be pope at once. This scandal Henry summarily ended by having all three deposed in assemblies of the clergy. Then he procured the election of a German bishop as Pope Clement II, who on the very day of his consecration crowned Henry emperor. Clement lived only a short time and was succeeded by three other royal nominees, all Germans. Of them the second was Leo IX, whose pontificate—to be discussed below—marks the resumption by the papacy of spiritual leadership in Europe. Meanwhile Henry had returned to Germany, where after nine rather uneventful years he died in 1056, leaving a boy of six to inherit the crown as Henry IV.

The reign of Henry III, characterized by easy successes on all fronts and by comparative freedom from major disturbances, has

generally been called the height of the mediæval empire. Actually it was the calm before the storm—one that had been long brewing. In this connection, it might be well to review the political situation in the empire toward the middle of the eleventh century. At that time Germany was still essentially what it had been under Otto I—a rather loose union of great duchies. The kings, it is true, had continuously enforced their right to make and unmake dukes at pleasure, and frequently they had installed members of the royal house. Experience had proved that ties of blood were wholly inadequate to overcome the separatist tendencies within the ancient territorial divisions. Nor was the Franconian policy of keeping the duchies under royal administration permanently successful. Henry III, after dispensing with half of the dukedoms, was eventually forced, through lack of an adequate civil service, to go back to the old system. The dukes of the eleventh century, however, generally found themselves with reduced territories and restricted powers.

Germany  
under  
Henry II

Of the ancient principalities which thus persisted, Saxony was the only one that largely retained its original character. There a son of Hermann Billung was recognized as duke under Otto II, and he was succeeded by four lineal descendants, the last of whom was to be the cause of much trouble for Henry IV. Meanwhile the powerful duchy of Bavaria had hardly survived the rebellion of Henry the Wrangler. From its borderlands Otto II created the independent duchy of Carinthia, as well as two frontier districts called the North Mark and the East Mark.<sup>9</sup> Under this same king occurred the permanent division of the old western duchy into Upper Lorraine and Lower Lorraine.<sup>10</sup> Suabia, after remaining for a while in the possession of the crown, was again granted out by Henry III. Franconia, on the other hand, continued to be administered by the emperor, and so, as a political entity, disappeared before the advance of many local princes—the archbishop of Mainz, the bishops of Worms and Speier, the count palatine of the Rhine, and others. Even within the territories of the dukes, the kings tended, as a check on the princely

<sup>9</sup> The North Mark lay between Franconia and Bohemia; the East Mark extended down the Danube to the Hungarian frontier and was soon to become famous as the duchy of Austria.

<sup>10</sup> Lower Lorraine included the territory between the Rhine and the Scheldt; Upper Lorraine consisted primarily of the Moselle Valley. As the former virtually disappeared, its ruler came to style himself duke of Brabant. Upper Lorraine then became known simply as Lorraine.



authority, to defend the independent powers of the counts and margraves.

The advance of the feudal nobility

In the west of the empire various factors combined to produce a rapid dispersion of all regalian rights. For example, the duke of Lower Lorraine lost all effective control over the bishop of Liège and over the counts of Hainaut, Namur, Limburg, Luxemburg, Holland, and Friesland. For the same reason the kingdom of Arles, which was inherited by Henry III along with that of Germany, brought him little beyond an empty title. The accession of a distant king, in fact, definitely assured the autonomy of the local baronage, headed by the marquis of Provence and the count of Burgundy (Franche-Comté). In Italy, too, the royal policy had been deliberately turned to the aggrandizement of the smaller nobles at the expense of the greater. It was in pursuance of this same design that Conrad II issued his decree of 1037, guaranteeing heredity of tenure for those who held of his Italian vassals. Henry III was able to maintain at least a semblance of the old Carolingian government throughout his empire. But how long would the structure hold together under a weaker or less fortunate ruler? Within this whole aggregation of kingdoms, was there one little portion that the emperor could really call his own? In striving for a continent, he might fail to keep even a duchy.

### 3. GREGORY VII AND HENRY IV

The minority of Henry IV (1056-66)

The death of Henry III gave the regency to his widow, Agnes of Poitou, who governed Germany in the name of her infant son for six years. Agnes, being a woman of mediocre ability and suffering from the added handicap of having a foreign upbringing, utterly failed to control the situation. On all sides ambitious princes sought to profit by the king's minority and before long the kingdom was in turmoil. In 1062 the regency of Agnes came to a sudden and dramatic end. Encouraged by a group of discontented nobles, the archbishop of Cologne secured control of the royal administration by the simple expedient of kidnaping the young king. Next it was the archbishop of Bremen who made himself all-powerful at court. Finally, in 1066, Henry decided to take charge of the government himself. A youth of seventeen, he was thus called on to restore order in three kingdoms, where for the past ten years his vassals had become accustomed to act very much as they pleased. In Italy and Burgundy he could as yet hope to accomplish little; but in Germany the prestige of the

monarchy, though impaired, was still great. And for a time circumstance continued to aid the king in developing an independent policy.

Henry IV, though somewhat spoiled as a child, quickly grew into a man of very remarkable ability. Easily intoxicated by success, he was constantly liable to overreach himself by foolish violence; and yet, when met by disaster, he displayed intelligence and resolution deserving a kindlier fate than was his. It was indeed a tragic destiny that compelled him to fight a losing battle against insuperable odds. Although the cause that he defended was not altogether noble, it was one which he inherited with his crown and which he felt that he could not abandon without utter loss of self-respect. If he had been left free to concentrate his energy in a struggle with the German baronage, he might well have triumphed and still, like William the Conqueror in England, have remained on good terms with the reformed papacy. It was the imperial heritage that led to his ruin and the ruin of the kingship that he bequeathed to his unfortunate successors.

For a while, however, Henry was concerned principally with local problems. Apparently realizing that the monarchy still lacked a solid foundation on which to erect any permanent governmental structure, Henry began an intensive campaign to reorganize and consolidate his domain lands. Since these lay primarily in Saxony, the contemplated reform would have the added advantage of strengthening the royal control over that almost independent duchy. So the king proceeded with a high hand to reassert his title to broad estates which he said had been unlawfully alienated, to substitute low-born South Germans for unruly Saxon officials, and on all sides to raise castles as centers of defense and administration. Such procedure was tantamount to the creation of a new royal principality, and the Saxon aristocracy, with considerable justification, felt that the step boded ill for their cherished autonomy. One of the magnates to be displeased by the king's action was Otto of Nordheim, a Saxon noble whom Agnes had made duke of Bavaria. In 1070 Otto was suddenly accused of traitorous conduct and deprived of his dukedom. Fleeing to the north, he found ready support from Magnus, son of the Saxon duke, and the result was the first insurrection against Henry IV.

The Saxon  
war  
(1070-75)

The king, however, acted promptly and in 1071 captured both

rebels—a success that encouraged him to extend his ambitious projects. When the duke died in the following year, Henry kept Magnus in prison and threatened, by the further erection of castles, to establish personal dominion throughout the entire duchy. The vanity of such an ambition was proved by the great explosion of 1073. Almost every Saxon noble, lay and clerical, seized arms to oppose the royal aggression. Henry, engaged in preparation for a Polish war, was taken completely by surprise and for a year remained powerless to resist the demands either of the Saxons or of the southern dukes, who were quick to take advantage of the situation. Yet within another year, by adroitly playing off one party against another, Henry had regained his mastery. Not a prince outside the rebellious duchy dared refuse his summons in the spring of 1075. With an imposing army of knights, Henry then fell on the Saxon host, still largely made up of old-fashioned foot-soldiers, and in June won a decisive victory. By the end of the year, with the revolt crushed and its leaders in prison, Saxony again lay at his feet. Once more Henry overestimated the quality of his triumph. At a moment when every German prince was alarmed over the king's ruthless treatment of his opponents, he saw fit to invite a bitter conflict with one of the great popes of all time.

Leo IX  
(1049-54)  
and the  
rise of  
Hilde-  
brand

This man, until his election to the see of St. Peter, bore the name of Hildebrand. From that fact it has been supposed that he was of Germanic extraction; but little is known of his early life except that he was brought up in Rome and took minor orders under Gregory VI, one of the popes put out of office by Henry III in 1046. Following Gregory into exile, Hildebrand spent several years as a monk in the Rhinelands, where he became identified with the reform sponsored by Cluny and other religious centers. There, too, he attracted the notice of Bruno, bishop of Toul, who, on being nominated to the papacy in 1049, took him back to Rome. Leo IX, as the new pope styled himself, immediately assumed the leadership of the reform movement in Europe and through his energetic personality made his pontificate of six years one of the most significant in history. With him the long degradation of the Roman church suddenly ended. Traveling through France and Germany, as well as Italy, Leo everywhere held councils devoted to the punishment of simony and clerical marriage, and at the same time he revived the papal influence

over the great prelates and temporal princes of the west. In all this work Hildebrand was from the outset intimately associated.

After the death of Leo's successor, the line of German popes came to an end. In 1058 an Italian bishop was elected as Nicholas II, and with his pontificate the growing independence of the Roman church became clearly apparent. Hildebrand, whose reforming activity had been unceasing, was now made principal assistant to Nicholas, with the title of archdeacon. So it was hardly mere coincidence that in this same year, 1059, the papacy should adopt two measures of the utmost significance. One was the alliance with the Normans in southern Italy, by which—as noted above—Robert Guiscard's conquests were made into a papal fief and the Sicilian expedition of Count Roger received the formal blessing of the church.<sup>11</sup> This treaty was a notable victory for the diplomacy of Hildebrand, who had conducted the preliminary negotiations, and its meaning was plain to all observers: the papacy, backed by the lances of the Normans, was no longer to be subservient to the German king.

Nicholas  
II  
(1058-61)

The complement to the new departure in external policy was the famous electoral decree of 1059. The provision of the canon law,<sup>12</sup> that a bishop should be elected by the clergy and people of the diocese, had long since come to mean that the effective decision rested with the former only. And very generally the right had devolved in particular on those clergy who were attached to the service of the cathedral and were organized in a chapter under a monastic or semi-monastic rule. These groups, however, had almost without exception come under the domination of some king or prince, whose nomination to the vacant see was the equivalent of appointment. Such power had regularly been enjoyed by Charlemagne and his successors, including the Saxon and Franconian kings. The control of the papacy by the latter rested on the extension of the same system into Italy through the revival of the imperial title. Even the pious and virtuous Henry III had named popes quite as a matter of course, and his impetuous son had not the slightest intention of renouncing his inherited rights. To the imperial claim the decree of 1059 issued a sharp challenge, for it vested the control of papal elections in the

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 280.

<sup>12</sup> The law enforced in ecclesiastical courts is technically known as the canon law.

cardinal clergy of Rome.<sup>13</sup> All initiative in the matter was given to the cardinal bishops; the emperor was left no function beyond that of confirming an accomplished act.

Hilde-  
brand's  
election  
as pope  
(1073)

On the death of Nicholas in 1061, the imperial court made an effort to dictate the election of his successor; but the abduction of the king resulted in the triumph of the Roman candidate, Alexander II, who thereupon held uncontested sway throughout the remainder of his life. During his entire pontificate it was Hildebrand who generally dominated the papal counsels. Through the vigorous policy of the latter, Alexander gave his support to the Norman expedition against Harold of England, the success of which assured papal control of the church in Britain. Even in Germany the cause of reform made distinct headway. Henry IV, in the early years of his personal government, showed himself very conciliatory, readily agreeing to dismiss from his court various bishops found guilty of simony. And since the Saxon war broke out just as Alexander died in 1073, the king was given no opportunity to protest the election of Hildebrand. That event, as far as Roman sentiment was concerned, was a foregone conclusion, for the passing from the scene of all other prominent figures left the great archdeacon as the sole outstanding candidate. The populace, indeed, refused to wait for the action of the cardinals; they acclaimed Hildebrand pope even before the funeral services for Alexander had been completed. The election was at best a tumultuous affair; but there was no one to challenge its validity, and the new pope, assuming the name of Gregory VII, was promptly recognized by Henry IV.

Gregory is described by contemporaries as a small and rather unattractive man; as in the case of Napoleon, his physique was no measure of his greatness. Though not called on to lead armies or to remake the map of Europe, he possessed the genius for command and the statesmanlike intelligence that are commonly known as Napoleonic. And the fact that his entire life was unswervingly devoted to a lofty ideal gave him a moral grandeur that has been commonly wanting in generals and world-rulers. There can be as little question of his sincerity as of his experience. Gregory's every word and act prove that his own personality was submerged in the office which he fervently believed to be the supreme au-

<sup>13</sup> The name comes from the Latin *cardo*, a hinge. The cardinal clergy are by definition those who serve at the axis of Christendom—at Rome.

thority on earth. Nor was this concept of the papacy the product of scholarly study. He was a comparatively unlearned man, holding, like the first Gregory, to the "wise foolishness of God." To him, as to St. Augustine, the problem of church and state resolved itself into a matter of right and wrong. The power that could absolve from sin must be above all others. And to him the Petrine supremacy was no merely convenient theory. When Gregory said that through him one might hear the voice of St. Peter, Chief of the Apostles, he expressed his profoundest conviction. Furthermore, we may be sure that Gregory sought no violent altercation with Henry IV. His attitude toward William of England shows that he was quite willing to arrange a sensible agreement with a powerful king who was loyal to the papacy. His controversy over the imperial authority was provoked not by his regard for abstract principle, but by a very practical issue that could not be avoided. When such an issue arose, Gregory thought clearly and acted decisively.

During the early years of his pontificate Gregory's chief attention continued to be given to the campaign against simony and clerical marriage. In this connection he encountered much opposition from prelates in Germany and Lombardy who had been appointed through the influence of the king. Even those bishops who favored reform bitterly resented the efforts of the pope to enforce his direct authority. Henry, plunged in political troubles and anxious to secure coronation as emperor, still maintained a submissive attitude. So Gregory proceeded without hesitation to suspend a number of bishops for disobedience, and finally, in the spring of 1075, struck at what he considered another root of evil by prohibiting lay investiture. Kings and princes might still be allowed to exert some influence in elections, but the symbols of ecclesiastical office could be conferred upon the successful candidate only by an ecclesiastic.

The investiture controversy

To the announcement of this decree Henry made no reply and by the end of the year showed only too clearly that his earlier humility had been assumed merely to gain time. In December, therefore, Gregory sent him a warning letter, threatening excommunication unless he at once proved his good faith and wholeheartedly joined the Apostolic See in supporting the program of reform. Henry, dazzled by his recent triumph in Saxony, then threw aside all caution and announced to the world that he pro-

posed to reassert his power in Italy and reduce the papacy to its old subservience. Summoning his bishops to a council at Worms in January, 1076, he easily inspired them to denounce the pope as a usurper and declare him deposed from office. Adopting their sentence and decorating it with insulting language of his own, Henry wrote the pope to the same effect, calling him a "false monk" and bidding him to come down from the apostolic seat which he had secured through violence and "be accursed through all the ages."

Excom-  
munica-  
tion of  
Henry  
(1076)

Gregory's answer to this challenge could not be a matter of doubt. Every king, being human, was subject to the discipline of the church for his sins. Nearly seven hundred years earlier Ambrose of Milan had enforced that lesson against the magnificent emperor Theodosius. Henry had been warned to repent and to correct his ways. He had not only refused, but had attacked the divine authority of the Roman bishop. So Gregory, in solemn language of admirable simplicity, declared Henry excommunicate and deprived of his regal authority; his subjects, released from their oaths of fealty, were to be free to elect another in his place. The very boldness of this pronouncement caused a tremendous sensation. Yet, if it had not been based on shrewd political calculation, it would have remained only a heroic gesture. As it was, Gregory proved that he had analyzed the situation in Germany more accurately than had Henry. The princes, already aroused by the threatening attitude of the monarchy, welcomed the pope's authorization of revolt. Meeting at Tribur in October, 1076, they declared Henry deposed unless he could secure absolution within a year and, being unable to agree on a rival candidate, postponed further action until, in the following February, they could reassemble at Augsburg under the presidency of the pope.

Canossa  
(1077)

By the end of 1076 Henry found his victories of the previous year entirely undone. All the Saxon rebels had been released and were again intrenched in their old positions. Virtually the whole lay nobility of the kingdom had turned against him; even the bishops, frightened at the consequences of their action, had hastened to make submission. There was only one escape for the king: to prevent the union of his enemies at Augsburg, he must swallow his pride and come to terms with the pope. Accordingly, in the last days of December, Henry set out on his arduous and humiliating journey. Gregory, in the meantime, had started for Germany; but hearing that Henry had already

crossed the Alps, he fell back to Canossa, a castle of his staunch supporter, the countess of Tuscany. Here in January, 1077, appeared Henry—barefooted, garbed in coarse wool, and stripped of all regalia. Gregory, as he tells us in his own letter, kept Henry waiting for three days; perhaps he was reluctant to abandon the dictatorship of German affairs. As a priest of the church, however, Gregory had to receive the penitent and grant him absolution.

This famous episode was hailed then, and has since been regarded, as a great moral victory for the church. It proclaimed to the world that the papacy, within the lifetime of one man, had been rescued from its long-continued decadence and raised to a new height of renown. Captivating the imagination of feudal Europe, the incident seemed to usher in a new and glorious age—the age of the crusades. For the moment the chief gainer was Henry, who had circumvented his enemies and given himself another chance to rebuild his fortunes. The princes, to be sure, went ahead with their plans. Rudolf, duke of Suabia, was finally set up as anti-king, and civil war continued to blaze. Yet the king's cause made progress, and in 1080 he succeeded in disposing of Rudolf. Having once more broken with Gregory and incurred a second excommunication, he now took an army to Italy and engaged in a three-year war with the papal forces. At last, when Gregory had refused all compromise, Henry took Rome, installed an anti-pope, and from him received the imperial crown (1084). Gregory, holding out in one of his castles, appealed for aid to Robert Guiscard, just returned from an expedition to Greece.<sup>14</sup> The Normans, as usual, proved to be unscrupulous allies. They not only drove Henry from Rome, but subjected the city to pillage. When they left, Gregory, in fear of reprisals, went with them—to die at Salerno in May, 1085. His last days were spent in bitter despondency. At the end he is reported to have exclaimed: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile."

The death  
of Gregory  
VII  
(1085)

Nevertheless, the cause for which Gregory lived and died had suffered no lasting defeat. Henry's attempt to dominate Italy resulted merely in the weakening of his hold on Germany. The civil war could not be quenched. Although he pacified Saxony by abandoning his original project, he was faced by a series of

The  
death of  
Henry IV  
(1106)

<sup>14</sup> See below, p. 331.



other rebellions, in which his own sons came to play a prominent part. Long before his death in the midst of this miserable struggle, Henry had abandoned Italy, and the Roman church had regained complete independence. The first great conflict between the empire and the papacy thus ended in a triumph for the latter. This advantage it was to maintain for well over a hundred years—a period of glorious achievement for western Europe.

Theories  
of church  
and state

During that time many other German kings were to revive the ill-fated ambitions of Henry IV and to be thwarted by other statesmanlike popes. While the circumstances changed, the fundamental issues remained the same. A mountain of controversial literature was to accumulate, yet its essential arguments can be very briefly stated. The imperialists continued to be fascinated by the tradition of Charlemagne, which was the tradition of the Roman Empire. The ecclesiastical theory of Otto I and his successors was substantially that of Justinian, Theodosius, and Constantine: the church, though permitted to decide matters of doctrine and to establish its own discipline, was a department of state. Like other departments, it was under the supreme control of the emperor, who held himself directly responsible to God. The ministers of the church, no less than lay officials, were imperial subjects; for men should "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." As a matter of history, this was an excellent thesis. The question was: Could it be applied to the Europe of the eleventh century? The imperialist doctrine ignored the fact that the Christian world was no longer an empire except in imagination. It was to become increasingly doubtful whether the emperor could enforce any real authority even in those regions where his nominal sovereignty was recognized. As a matter of academic discussion, it was all very well to appeal to memories of Roman majesty. In actuality, how could such an appeal bring security or inspiration to western Christendom?

To the advocates of ecclesiastical reform the conclusion seemed inescapable. The church, as an international organization, could not be subject to any state, whether or not the latter styled itself an empire. The papacy owed its existence as a world power to its independence of any western Cæsar. It was the dominance of the Byzantine government that had constantly brought the Greek church into conflict with the papacy. Furthermore, the great fathers, headed by St. Augustine, had eloquently demonstrated that all political institutions were the consequence of Adam's

sin. If man had remained in his pristine innocence, there would be no evil in the world. And without evil, there would be no need of governors, armies, police, courts, and penal laws. The state, therefore, was an ephemeral thing, necessary, but not divine like the church. The latter was the immediate representative of God on earth. It held the sole power among men of distinguishing good from evil. All persons, including kings and emperors, were subject to its jurisdiction. Its supreme head, the Roman bishop, held the keys of heaven and hell. He had to be recognized as the final arbiter of all human affairs. Under him all Christians formed one commonwealth. Separate kingdoms and principalities might each have its rightful and necessary functions, but in case of conflict all should obey the church and its sovereign spokesman, the pope.

Stated by a John XII, such a pronouncement would have had few listeners. Stated by Gregory VII, it swept Europe. The consequence of the enthusiasm which he awakened may be seen in the crusade of 1095.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CRUSADE

#### I. THE EAST BEFORE THE CRUSADE

The  
Byzantine  
Empire  
under the  
Macedo-  
nian  
dynasty

THE Turks, against whom the crusade was suddenly launched in 1095, rose to prominence in Asia through the decay of two powers: the caliphate at Bagdad and the Byzantine Empire. The latter, after heroic defense against the Moslem attack in the eighth century, sadly declined in the ninth. It was during this period of weakness that the Bulgarians extended their conquests across the Balkan peninsula, and Pope Nicholas I denounced the imperial government for unlawfully deposing a patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> The wearer of the purple at the most critical moment was the unworthy Michael III who, from one of his minor vices, came to be called the Drunkard. Being passionately fond of chariot-racing, he singled out from among his low-born companions a Macedonian horse trainer named Basil and loaded him with honors. From the office of chief equerry, Basil eventually rose to be co-emperor, rivaled in power only by Michael's uncle. In 866 the latter was disposed of by assassination, and when Michael gave signs of transferring his affections, Basil secured undisputed title to the throne by having him murdered also. Thus was founded the illustrious Macedonian dynasty which, in one fashion or another, maintained its authority at Constantinople for nearly two hundred years.

Basil's reign (867-86) was not unsuccessful. He actively pushed a much needed reform of the finances, issued some admirable law books to supplement Justinian's compilation of three centuries earlier, and called a general council to reestablish peace in the church. Basil's son and grandson were men of scholarly tastes, who not only encouraged learning on the part of others, but themselves produced many noteworthy books, mainly dealing with phases of the imperial administration. In private morals, however, the Macedonian emperors were far from paragons and, as time passed, the record became unbelievably fantastic. In the later tenth century the court came to be dominated by the empress

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 233, 241.

Theophano. She, it was said, made her husband emperor by helping to murder his father, and then made herself a widow by poisoning her husband. In 963, at any rate, she married the victorious general, Nicephorus Phocas.

A noble of Cappadocia descended from a long line of distinguished soldiers, Nicephorus had recently gained renown by taking Crete and fighting successful campaigns in Asia. As emperor by marriage, he now continued his triumphant offensive, completing the conquest of Cilicia, Cyprus, and a portion of northern Syria, including Antioch and Aleppo. Momentarily it seemed as if the Roman state, surviving the short-lived empire of the caliphs, might yet revive the glories of Heraclius. The empress, meanwhile, had tired of her soldier-husband's severity. So, in 969, she connived at his assassination by his nephew, an Armenian cavalry officer named John Tzimisces (originally Chemshkik). Having already stooped to very foul means, John did not hesitate at perjury to assure his coronation. All blame was cast on Theophano and she was locked up in a convent for the rest of her life. To legitimate his usurpation, the new sovereign then married a princess of the Macedonian house. Normally we should hardly expect noble achievements from a reign thus inaugurated; but such circumstances were not unusual at Constantinople, and John made a good emperor. While maintaining religious peace and political stability, he won a military success on the northern frontier that was destined to have important consequences.

Nicephorus  
Phocas  
and John  
Tzimisces  
(963-76)

Bulgaria, Christianized in the later eighth century under Boris I, reached its height of power under his son Simeon, the first of the line to assume the title of tsar, or emperor. On Simeon's death in 927 the monarchy weakened; by the time of Nicephorus the western half of Bulgaria had broken off as a separate state, the Serbs had reasserted their independence, and from the north had appeared a new host of invaders led by the Russians. The latter, as we have already seen, were by origin Swedish vikings who had gained control of the trade routes between the Baltic and the Black Sea.<sup>2</sup> By the tenth century their scattered bands had come to be more or less united under the rule of a prince at Kiev, who also enjoyed a wide dominion over the nomads of the steppe and the Slavic tribes of the interior. From the Dnieper

The rise  
of the  
Russians

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 232.

the Russians, at the head of mixed armies, extended their plundering, on the one hand to the shores of the Caspian and, on the other, to the Balkan kingdoms. Down to the middle of the tenth century the princes of Kiev bore Scandinavian names, after that Slavic. For example, it was Igor who led an attack on Constantinople between 941 and 945. His wife and successor was Olga, but their son was called Svyatoslav and his son was the famous Vladimir. At the accession of John Tzimiskes, the Russians had overrun Bulgaria and from there were preparing to advance on Adrianople. In 971 the emperor intervened. The Russians were driven beyond the Danube and forced to make peace. Eastern Bulgaria was turned into a Byzantine province.

Basil II  
(976-1025)

John's northern war was continued by Basil II, brother of the princess Theophano who had been married to Otto II.<sup>3</sup> After putting down an insurrection in Eastern Bulgaria, Basil turned upon the western kingdom and reduced it also. By an amazing recovery, the imperial border was thus brought back to the Danube. Meanwhile Basil had established friendly relations with the Russian prince, Vladimir, whose dominions extended from the frontiers of Poland to the coast of the Black Sea. By the peace now sworn, both states secured valuable commercial rights. The emperor, furthermore, obtained an army for his personal protection—the famous Varangian guard, which continued to serve at Constantinople for well over a century. On his side, Vladimir agreed to accept Christianity for himself and his people. This promise he faithfully carried out, and thereby the Russians were brought within the pale of civilized nations.

The end  
of the  
Macedo-  
nian  
dynasty

Basil II died in 1025, and an ignoble brother survived him only three years, leaving two daughters, Zoë and Theodora, to end the dynasty. The former selected in turn three emperor-husbands, and yet had as heir only her sister, who died unmarried in 1056. There were to be no further revivals of imperial strength. The Macedonian family, in spite of the slimy intrigue that perpetually entangled it, had produced a number of talented emperors. In the eleventh century the old depravity continued, unrelieved by even sporadic outbursts of constructive energy—a weary recital of civil war, palace revolution, and vicious incompetence. The outstanding events which thenceforth affected the fate of the empire cast no credit on its rulers—the permanent

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 300.

schism with the Roman church, the loss of Italy to the Normans, and the triumph of the Turks in Asia Minor. One of these events has already been noted; the other two must now briefly occupy our attention.

Relations between the eastern and western churches had frequently been broken before the eleventh century; even when the two sections of Christendom had been nominally at peace, they had never been in complete agreement. The fundamental cause of this chronic disharmony was of course the ancient contrast between the Greek and Latin cultures, which led to different ideals in religion and in ecclesiastical organization. Such differences, however, were in themselves hardly adequate to produce a major schism. Congregations might well use a variety of languages, follow separate rituals, and even disagree on points of discipline, without denying to one another communion in the one true faith. The sole issue of grave importance was the papal headship, to which the eastern bishops had never given enthusiastic support. Nor, so long as they were dominated by the imperial court, would they ever do so, for Rome had become identified with the principle of ecclesiastical independence. Yet the emperors were in the main easy-going politicians, anxious to avoid religious controversy; and even the more aggressive popes were too sensible to insist on a program of perfection. Normally, therefore, both parties were willing to compromise on a working agreement; it was only some untoward event that precipitated a crisis.

The  
eastern  
and  
western  
churches

In the eighth century a violent breach had been occasioned by the Iconoclastic Controversy,<sup>4</sup> in the course of which the pope met the hostility of the emperor by recognizing the sovereign authority of the Frankish king. The final restoration of images throughout the east in 843 ended that schism, but almost at once Pope Nicholas I brought on another by championing the cause of a deposed patriarch at Constantinople. On this occasion Photius, the imperial nominee to the patriarchate, had formally condemned the Latins for various irregularities—such as eating eggs in Lent, using unleavened bread in the mass, shaving the faces of priests, and saying that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*). Just at the crucial moment, however, the accession of Basil I relieved the situation, and after much re-creation peace was restored in 898. Then ensued the degrada-

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 179 f., 241.

tion of the Roman church, and the Byzantine emperors of the tenth century came to disregard the possibility of interference from the west. It was logical, therefore, that no serious trouble should arise until the epoch-making pontificate of Leo IX.

Ecclesi-  
astical  
rivalry  
among the  
Slavs

Meanwhile another cause of ill-feeling between Rome and Constantinople had arisen—the bitter rivalry of the two churches for the domination of eastern Europe. This contest began in the ninth century, after the extension of Charlemagne's empire had first brought Christian missionaries into direct contact with the Slavic peoples along the frontier. There the Roman cause was from the first identified with that of the German conquerors, who were led by political as well as by religious motives to oppose all Greek influence from the east. So it happened that the work of two brothers from Salonica, later known as Saints Cyril and Methodius, at once became the subject of controversy. Fired with the ambition of spreading the Gospel into Moravia, Cyril devised an alphabet of modified Greek characters in which to write the Slavic language, and by means of it translated books of divine service and portions of the Bible for use among the heathen. The two brothers then went to Moravia, but there, in the face of opposition from the west, failed to obtain permanent success. Although the Czechs rapidly adopted Christianity, their ecclesiastical system was destined to be Latin—a result assured by the Magyar invasion and the subsequent establishment of the Holy Roman Empire. By the end of the tenth century, not only Bohemia, but also Poland and Hungary had been organized as Christian states under German influence and with a clergy dependent on Rome.

To the south and east, however, the work of Cyril and Methodius won a triumph such as they could never have foreseen. Cyril's liturgy, originally composed in the vernacular of Macedonia, was readily accepted by the Serbs and Croats, and when Boris I adopted Christianity, it was that same system which became official throughout Bulgaria. The popes, to be sure, tried to enforce their authority over the newly organized churches, but in this respect their cause was ruined by the schism that lasted from 867 to 898. Afterwards the advancing power of the Macedonian emperors, together with the collapse of Roman prestige, assured Byzantine dominance in the Balkans. Under Basil II, Constantinople gained an even more significant victory through the conversion of the Russians, for Vladimir's acceptance of the

Greek ecclesiastical system resulted in its extension from the Black Sea to the Baltic. With the Greek church went Greek influence in the fields of politics, commerce, art, and all intellectual life. Even today the prevalence of a semi-Greek alphabet—a modification of Cyril's original invention—marks off one great section of the Slavic world from the other, which has continued to use the Latin alphabet ever since the tenth century.

Another long-standing cause of friction between the papacy and the Byzantine Empire was the ecclesiastical status of southern Italy. At the height of the Iconoclastic Controversy the emperor Leo III formally removed his Italian provinces from the jurisdiction of the Roman church, and in spite of the later reconciliation, his decree remained in effect. Whether it could be enforced by the feeble successors of Basil II remained problematical until the whole situation was changed by the conquest of Robert Guiscard.<sup>5</sup> That event immediately raised another question: What should be the attitude of the papacy toward the Normans? The pope at the time was the able Leo IX. At first he thought, by joining forces with the emperor, to advance the Roman cause at Constantinople. Unfortunately for this plan, the Normans had no difficulty in defeating both the imperial and the papal armies. Then, while the pope's attitude was still in doubt, the headstrong Michael Cerularius, patriarch of Constantinople, precipitated a religious crisis. Reviving the policy of Photius, he denounced all the peculiar usages of the Latins and closed all churches in his capital where they were in force. The pope, accordingly, was given no choice. Just before his death, Leo IX signed peace with the Normans and excommunicated the patriarch. The latter, taking advantage of the vacancy at Rome, drove the incompetent emperor into a reversal of policy, called a synod in the summer of 1054, and there secured formal condemnation of the Roman church and all who accepted its authority.

The final  
schism  
between  
east and  
west  
(1054)

Thus was written the final act in the intermittent conflict between the eastern and the western churches, for the breach made in 1054 has remained unhealed down to the present. Careful analysis of the events leading up to it tends to place the responsibility with the patriarch Michael Cerularius. Some, of course, may argue that morally his action was wholly laudable; but it is hard to see why the schism was inevitable. The papacy at that

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 279 f., 313.



time was no other than it had claimed to be for many centuries, and Leo's conduct throughout the affair was irreproachable. Michael, an able but politically ambitious prelate, deliberately broke with Rome by condemning practices which Rome would never abandon. In any case, as far as the Byzantine Empire was concerned, the step was suicidal. At the very moment when the papacy was assuming the leadership of a reinvigorated Europe, Constantinople chose to assert its uncompromising independence—and this on the eve of another great Mohammedan offensive in Asia!

The rise  
of the  
Seljuk  
Turks

The disintegration of the Arab state under the Abbasids has been briefly described in a previous chapter. By the end of the tenth century the caliphate had become a mere name; actually the Moslem territories were held by a large number of independent princes, some of whom were avowed supporters of heretical doctrines. Since 945, in fact, one of these unorthodox chieftains had controlled Bagdad itself, making and unmaking caliphs at discretion. Among the adventurers who profited by this state of affairs were many Turks.<sup>6</sup> Adopting Islam and migrating westward in large numbers, they had become especially prominent as mercenary troops—a profession that has always tended to produce streams of conquerors. By such a transition one band in particular was now to achieve spectacular fortune. The tribe of a Turk named Seljuk is first heard of in the service of a local emir to the east of the Oxus. Early in the eleventh century the sons of Seljuk, with the permission of the authorities, led their forces into Khorassan, where they quickly became so powerful that they could defy all their neighbors. When the governor of the province tried to put them out, they put him out, and thenceforth recognized no superior except the caliph. By 1038 Togrul Beg, grandson of Seljuk, had established himself at Nishapur with the title of sultan.<sup>7</sup> In 1055 he entered Bagdad, freed the caliph from the despotism of the Persian heretic, and substituted his own control. So a Turkish adventurer, now styling himself Right Hand of the Commander of the Faithful, came to rule the Arab empire, or as much of it as he could conquer.

The  
Battle of  
Manzikert  
(1071)

In 1063 the power of Togrul Beg was inherited by his son Alp Arslan (Brave Lion), who proceeded with amazing energy to extend his dominion on every side. Having subdued all Persia,

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> A vague Arabic word meaning ruler.

together with the territory eastward to the Oxus, he turned in the opposite direction to complete the reduction of Armenia. That unfortunate Christian kingdom, after regaining its independence from the weakening caliphate, had recently been annexed by the Byzantine Empire. It was now left to a cruel fate, being virtually destroyed by Alp Arslan in 1065. Then, while bands of Armenian fugitives were finding new homes in Cilicia, the Turks pressed on into Cappadocia. At Constantinople, meanwhile, the throne had passed to Romanus IV, a brave soldier but a poor general. Taking the field against the Turkish raiders, he rashly drove them far back into the mountains of Armenia, where in 1071 Alp Arslan annihilated his army at Manzikert. Like the Moslem victory on the Yarmuk four centuries before, this battle radically changed the course of history. The Byzantine military power, so carefully preserved by the Macedonian emperors, was permanently destroyed, and the whole of Asia Minor, together with the conquests of Nicephorus Phocas, was engulfed by a new tide of Mohammedan invasion. Anatolia, which for hundreds of years had supplied the empire with the best of its commanders and civil servants, was now recolonized by savage immigrants, whom the prospect of easily won riches brought in swarms from their distant homelands. Greek civilization persisted in the towns of the coast, but from that day to this the interior of Asia Minor has been solidly Turkish.

Alp Arslan did not live to see the momentous consequences of his victory at Manzikert. Dying in the ~~next~~ year, he was succeeded by his son Malik Shah (1072-92), with whom the Seljuk power reached its height. Theoretically, he remained merely the deputy of the caliph; actually he bore what had been the caliph's own title, Commander of the Faithful, and his word was law over a vast expanse of territory. In Asia Minor Byzantine resistance completely broke down, and there Suleiman, a cousin of Malik Shah, established himself as sultan of Roum (Rome) with his capital at Nicæa, just across the strait from Constantinople. In Syria, meanwhile, the local dynasty put up a stubborn fight against the Seljuks, but by 1080 it too had yielded. So Turkish emirs came to rule at Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, and Antioch. History then repeated itself. The death of Malik Shah was followed by civil war over the succession, and the reconstituted Moslem empire broke apart into warring fragments. That was the situation when, for the first time since the decay of ancient Rome, an

The Turks  
in Asia  
Minor and  
Syria

army from western Europe assumed the offensive on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean.

## 2. THE WEST BEFORE THE CRUSADE

Christian  
offensives  
in the  
west

In the last decade of the eleventh century widely separated currents of influence converged to produce the great movement known as the Crusade. In the east the collapse of the Byzantine Empire before the Turkish onslaught provided a favorable occasion for western intervention, but the power that made possible a magnificent counter-attack was the feudal aristocracy of the west marshaled under the banner of the reformed papacy. This dramatic climax cannot be explained by drawing up a simple list of alleged causes. Obviously, before we can see why the warlike hosts of western Christendom launched an ambitious offensive in far-off Asia, we must understand how they had come to assume any offensive at all. In the eighth century the original drive of the Arabs against Europe had been checked by two powers: the Byzantine Empire in the east and the Franks in the west. Both had then been compelled to stand on the defensive for a long time. As late as the tenth century, while the Macedonian emperors were reconquering Crete, Cyprus, and northern Syria, the African Moslems were still extending their dominion in the western Mediterranean, occupying Sicily and ravaging the coasts of Gaul and Italy. It was not until the eleventh century that they were gradually compelled, through the increasing strength of their foes, to withdraw from their advanced positions.

Spain

How the Christian princes of Spain, aided by thousands of French recruits, began a successful advance against the paralyzed caliphate of Cordova has been seen in an earlier chapter. By 1085 they had gained such headway that the local emirs, as a last desperate resort, decided to call in the Almoravids (*al-murabitun*, religious ascetics). The latter had begun as a group of fanatical Berbers pledged to revive the original purity of the Mohammedan faith. Emerging from the region of the Sahara, they had quickly built up a formidable army through an effective combination of preaching and raiding, and so had won absolute control of northern Africa as far east as Algiers. On hearing the appeal of the Spanish Moors, their chiefs naturally answered with enthusiasm and in 1086 dispatched a force across the strait. The result was the battle of Zallaca, in which the Christians suffered a terrific defeat. They were, in fact, able to hold their recent conquests

largely because the reforming zeal of the Almoravids immediately embroiled them with the easy-going princes whom they had come to rescue. Thanks to this respite, the Christians were able to secure necessary reinforcements, and eventually their hosts again swept forward.

The fate of Spain was of course decided by land warfare, but to the eastward a contest of even greater significance was taking place on the sea. By means of their naval supremacy, the Moslems had secured possession of the western Mediterranean islands and from these bases had established for themselves a virtual monopoly of trade between Europe and Africa. Until the Saracen fleets were swept from the neighboring waters, Provençal and Italian merchants could expect no relief from the piratical attacks to which they had long been exposed. And in the absence of any competent royal or princely authority, it was the cities of Italy which had to assume the leadership. How the eleventh century brought a striking revival of commerce and urban life to the more progressive regions of the west will be seen in the next chapter. For the moment it need only be stated that the opening of that century found three great seaports able and willing to undertake a war against the infidel: Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. Venetian ships were already engaged in cleaning out the nests of freebooters along the Adriatic shore; from there it was a simple matter to turn against the corsairs of Sicily. In 1022 a joint expedition from Pisa and Genoa captured the island of Sardinia and during the ensuing years these cities, together or separately, carried out successful offensives all through the western Mediterranean. Finally, in 1087, their occupation of Mahdiah in Tunis forced the emir of that region to submit to their terms, and this victory may be said to have ended the Moslem sea power in the west.

The war  
on the sea

The Italian cities, in return for commercial advantages, also gave valuable aid to the Norman advance. Within six years after Leo IX had broken with Constantinople, his successor, Nicholas II, recognized Robert Guiscard as duke of Apulia. In 1071 the capture of Bari completed the conquest of the Byzantine provinces, and the fall of Palermo in the next year assured the ultimate reduction of Sicily. Turning to the north, Guiscard then took Salerno and pushed his troops into the old duchy of Benevento—aggressions which for a time won him the hostility of Gregory VII. But the latter, on becoming once more embroiled

The  
Norman  
power in  
Italy

with Henry IV, saw fit to renew the Norman alliance in 1080, and so gave at least moral support to Guiscard's plan for the conquest of Constantinople. This move—influenced, of course, by the Greek schism—boded ill for the Byzantine Empire, and it set a precedent for momentous actions in the future.

The papal policy  
From the very outset the popes had been vitally interested in the campaigns being waged against the Moslem power in the west. In the first place, as temporal princes, they had cooperated in many attempts to check the plague of Saracen raids in Italy. Secondly, through their claim to spiritual headship, they could not fail to support any attack on the arch-enemies of the church. So the papacy had formally blessed the Christian war in Spain, the Norman conquest of Sicily, and the various enterprises undertaken by Genoa and Pisa. Some of these expeditions had also been encouraged by a guarantee of extensive indulgence—the assurance to any one who participated that his previous obligations for penance would be largely remitted. Besides, under Hildebrand's energetic guidance, the papacy had definitely formulated a policy of active intervention in European politics to enforce the Petrine supremacy and to advance the cause of ecclesiastical leadership throughout the world.

The predecessors of Gregory VII had backed William the Conqueror against a schismatic king of England, and Robert Guiscard against schismatic Greeks in Italy. Now Gregory himself was willing to take a much more ambitious step—one which might even lead to the revival of western domination in the east. Romanus IV survived his fearful defeat at Manzikert, but not the palace revolution that ensued. His successor, confronted on all sides by mounting disaster, appealed for aid to the pope, whose imagination was at once fired by the magnificent prospect thus unfolded. Then, in 1078, another insurrection at Constantinople brought to the throne another incompetent, and in three years he was supplanted by a military intriguer named Alexius Comnenus. Meanwhile the new master of southern Italy had inevitably been attracted by the provinces just across the narrow Adriatic. Indeed, some of his own rebellious vassals had already taken refuge in that country, and their success was clearly demonstrating the weakness of the Byzantine government. For a variety of reasons, Gregory VII decided in 1080 to support the Norman enterprise, and in the following year Guiscard, with the able assistance of his son Bohemund, launched a drive which he hoped would carry

him to the imperial throne. After taking Corfu and Durazzo, however, Guiscard was compelled to lead an army against Henry IV,<sup>8</sup> and the continuation of his eastern campaign was brought to a sudden end by his death in 1085, two months after that of Gregory VII.

With the passing of the great Norman adventurer, his dominions were threatened with disruption. In Sicily, to be sure, Count Roger triumphantly completed the Christian conquest; but on the mainland Guiscard's son, also named Roger, proved totally unable to control his restless vassals, chief among whom was his remarkable brother, Bohemund. To the north, meanwhile, the warfare between the imperial and the papal forces still raged. An aged friend of Gregory, elected to succeed him, died after a year of failure and the cardinals then chose a younger and an abler man, the famous Urban II. The new pope was a noble of Champagne who had left the world to become a monk at Cluny. There, however, his talents had quickly marked him out for distinction and about 1078 he had been delegated, at the pope's request, for service at Rome. For years the trusted assistant of Gregory VII, he now accepted the papacy as a solemn obligation to carry out the ideals of his departed master. He won an amazing success. In part it was due to the prestige which had been given to the office by Gregory. Yet Urban himself contributed to it in no small degree, for he very happily combined what in his day was profound learning with what in any day has constituted good sense and tactful leadership.

Urban II  
(1088-99)

By 1095 the aging Henry IV had given up all ambitions beyond the Alps, and the papacy was once more in control of Rome. Urban thus found the occasion auspicious for launching a great project that had long occupied his thoughts. In the east the emperor Alexius had succeeded, with the help of the Venetians, in driving out the Normans and in reestablishing his sovereignty throughout the Balkans; but, except for a portion of the coast, Asia Minor remained in Turkish possession. Knowing that by himself he was powerless to regain his lost provinces, Alexius appealed for aid to various western princes, including Pope Urban and Robert, count of Flanders, who had recently returned by way of Constantinople from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> All, of course, that the emperor expected or wished was a force of mer-

The  
project  
of a  
crusade

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 317.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 277.

cenaries who might, like the French knights in Spain, accept a share of lands in return for their services. The war should continue to be his war, waged for the recovery of his territory.

Urban, on the other hand, conceived a magnificent Latin enterprise, organized and controlled not by any secular prince, but by the papacy—a great Christian offensive which should absorb and surpass the lesser offensives that had already begun. If successful, such an undertaking might restore to Alexius some of his provinces; that was a minor consideration. The main objective was to unite all Christendom in a super-campaign to recover the Holy Land, substituting for the civil war that had long distracted Europe a general pacification under the dictatorship of the church. Accordingly, although Urban's plan had novel features, it was solidly based on religious idealism that was by no means revolutionary. For over a century the local clergy, especially in France, had been engaged in a rather fruitless effort to check the excesses of feudal warfare. Persons who refused to respect sacred places and to spare the non-combatant population were solemnly anathematized; and to enforce such decrees, sworn associations of nobles were formed in many dioceses. More recently this so-called Peace of God had been supplemented by the Truce of God—a similar organization to assure peaceful weekends by prohibiting all fighting between Thursday evening and Monday morning. Now, under papal leadership, such movements were taken up and combined with a dozen other momentous projects to constitute what became known as the Crusade.

The  
Council of  
Clermont  
(1095)

It was apparently in the summer of 1095 that Urban and his counselors decided on the action which was dramatically taken before the end of the year. Being himself a Frenchman, the pope well knew the audience to which he should first address himself. After a sort of triumphal progress throughout northern Italy, he crossed the Alps into France, where he spent many weeks investigating local conditions. Finally, in November, he held a council at Clermont, the chief city of Auvergne, to which the French clergy and nobility—knowing that untoward events impended—streamed from all directions. Urban naturally dominated the assembly. The papacy had now entered upon a great ascendancy in Europe; Urban, a man of culture, of handsome presence, and of great personal charm, was in the heart of his native land. The council attended to its routine business, including a renewal of the Truce of God and another excommunication of the king, Philip I,

for his evil life and his indifference to the cause of reform.<sup>10</sup> Then the pope, addressing the multitude in its own vernacular, delivered his epoch-making appeal. The exact text has not come down to us, but the substance of his speech is known from the reports of several chroniclers.

The Turks, he eloquently reminded his hearers, after almost destroying the Byzantine Empire had but recently seized the holy places in the east. What a noble work it would be to rescue the Lord's Sepulcher from their foul hands and to restore Christian dominion throughout the lands to which they had brought impiety and desolation! Who should assume this most sacred obligation if not the Franks, a people long distinguished for purity of faith, and a people famed beyond all others for glory in arms? Here, said Urban, they lived in a narrow country, crowded in by sea and mountain—a country which failed even to produce enough food for its teeming population. Syria, on the contrary, had been given by the Almighty to the children of Israel as a land "flowing with milk and honey." Jerusalem, the very center of the earth, called upon the western Christians for aid in her distress. Let them cease from their endless wars and dissensions. Let them no longer murder one another for petty gain. Let them rather join in one blessed enterprise, to wrest from the infidel the lands defiled by his presence, knowing that God would grant them not merely a rich earthly reward, but imperishable glory in the kingdom of heaven. And as the pope concluded, Clermont resounded with what was to become the war-cry of the crusaders: "*Dieu le veut*—God wills it!"

### 3. THE CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM

How shrewdly Urban had calculated his chances of success was proved by the event. Thanks not only to the pope's eloquent pronouncement at Clermont, but also to his untiring efforts during the following months, thousands soon vowed their adherence to the sacred cause. Each of them, as prescribed by the pope, marked his peculiar status by sewing on his garments a cross cut from cloth. Thus he became a *cruciatus* (French, *croisé*) and his expedition a crusade. Every man who took the cross, together with his family and all his belongings, at once came under the direct protection of the pope and, no matter how sinful, was as-

Preliminaries  
of the  
crusade

<sup>10</sup> See below, p. 369.



sured immediate entrance to paradise if he died repentant. On the other hand, any one who injured a crusader's person or family or property incurred the direst penalties that the church could enforce. To heighten the general enthusiasm now appeared many volunteer preachers, of whom the most famous was Peter the Hermit. Under their fervent exhortations, indeed, the crusading movement tended to get out of control. Crowds of ill-armed persons, devoid of adequate funds and without competent leaders, started on a mad pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Their march across the Balkan peninsula was attended by many disorders, and of those who reached Constantinople, the majority, on rashly advancing into Asia, were killed by the Turks. The few survivors who reached Palestine did so by awaiting the principal host.

These scattering efforts took place in the spring and summer of 1096. Meanwhile the princes who were to carry out the real crusade were slowly gathering forces in their respective countries. From the first, Urban had realized that the success of his project would depend on the support of the French, who in the last half-century had repeatedly proved their aptitude for great military undertakings. From the emperor Henry IV nothing could of course be expected, and most of his German subjects continued to be absorbed in local politics. Nor was Philip I of France, having just had his excommunication renewed at Clermont, the sort of person to lead a crusade. The king of England was William Rufus, second son of the Conqueror, intent on taking the duchy of Normandy from his elder brother Robert, and not at all eager for distant adventures. So it is plain why the chief actors in the great drama were not the wearers of royal crowns.

The  
leaders  
of the  
crusade

In the absence of Philip I, the Capetian house was represented by his brother Hugh, count of Vermandois—a man who proved to be otherwise undistinguished. Robert of Normandy also took the cross; and although he personally lacked statesmanlike qualities, he brought with him the prestige of an illustrious family and a group of important friends, including his brother-in-law, Stephen, count of Blois. A much more prominent crusader was Robert, count of Flanders, son of the great adventurer Robert the Frisian, who had himself made a famous pilgrimage to Jerusalem. And the neighboring house of Boulogne contributed no less than three important chiefs, the sons of Count Eustace II, who had fought with William the Conqueror at Hastings. Of the three brothers—Eustace, Godfrey, and Baldwin—the second was

destined to become an exalted hero of romance as the first Christian prince of Jerusalem. Yet in 1096 he was poor and relatively unknown. Being, through his mother, the grandson of a previous duke of Lower Lorraine, he had secured that duchy by confirmation from Henry IV; but the title gave him little real authority outside his own territory of Bouillon and in all his sympathies he remained essentially a French baron.

Raymond, count of Toulouse, headed an imposing contingent from the south of France. Being pious and wealthy, and having served against the Moors in Spain, he had a grand reputation, and his influence was further enhanced by the fact that the papal director of the crusade was his vassal, Adémar, bishop of Puy. But in spite of Raymond's pretensions, the best general within the Christian ranks was unquestionably Bohemund, son of Robert Guiscard. From such a father what military lessons could not be learned by a talented youth? Bohemund had seen action in Italy, Sicily, and Greece. He was familiar with the peoples and institutions of those countries and, to some extent at least, with their languages. He was awed neither by popes nor by emperors nor by sultans. And among his associates were many experienced soldiers of the same type, notably his nephew Tancred. Being left in Italy with nothing better than a narrow fief, Bohemund now eagerly grasped the opportunity of resuming Guiscard's oriental adventure. If not at Constantinople, he might yet reign at Antioch.

From this review of the foremost crusaders, the character of their followers may readily be imagined. On the whole, the Christian host that surged eastward in 1096 was much like those which had earlier fought in Spain, England, and southern Italy. It differed only in the fact that, instead of being enlisted for the service of a secular prince, it was mustered under the supreme command of the papacy. The church had previously blessed many enterprises launched by other authorities; now it had initiated and was proceeding to direct a vast campaign of its own. This in itself was eloquent testimony to the might of the organization headed by Urban II. Yet the men who were to put his plan into execution remained distinct individuals. Among them there might be a few idealists truly inspired by mystic religion. And the great multitude of knights, being quite sincere in their childlike faith, could easily be induced under momentary enthusiasm to forget all worldly motives. It is more than coincidence,

The  
motives  
of the  
crusaders

however, that the chief gainers from the crusade were to be hard-headed adventurers like the Norman Bohemund and shrewd merchants like the shipowners of Pisa and Genoa. Such men the papacy might for a time be able to use. Could it ever really dominate them?

The march of the crusading host started east in the autumn of 1096. Arrangements had already been made that all groups should converge on Constantinople, where the emperor Alexius agreed to furnish money, provisions, and troops to facilitate a rapid advance against the common foe. Godfrey of Lorraine, together with various French contingents, took the route down the Danube that had already been used by the earlier bands of irregulars. Raymond of Toulouse crossed the Alps into Lombardy and thence proceeded along the Dalmatian coast until he struck the main highway from Durazzo through Macedonia. This latter road was also chosen by the other leaders, but to reach it they took ship across the Adriatic from the Norman ports in southern Italy. There were many delays and various open conflicts between Greeks and Latins before all had assembled at the rendezvous. Friction had also developed between Alexius and the chiefs whom he sought to enroll for his service. Before he would provide for their further progress, he insisted that all should do homage to him for whatever lands they might conquer, and to this demand a few offered stubborn resistance. Nevertheless, in the face of necessity, all finally agreed to some sort of oath, and in the spring of 1097 the crusaders crossed into Asia for their first attack on the Moslem power.

The advance into Asia (1097) In this connection it should be remarked that no trust can normally be placed in the figures of mediæval chroniclers, who describe the size of armies and other multitudes with no regard for numerical accuracy. It is quite incredible that, as we are soberly told by many books, hundreds of thousands of crusaders started out from Constantinople in 1097. Such numbers, if our estimate is restricted to knights, must be divided by ten. Although to our eyes an army of twenty to thirty thousand is not impressive, it was tremendous for the eleventh century. And against it the local Turkish princes could bring no equal force, for all Moslem unity in Asia had again vanished since the death of Malik Shah. The Christians, therefore, had every prospect of success if only they held together. With the help of a Byzan-

tine army, Nicæa was taken after a siege of well over a month and was immediately given up to the emperor. Then, while the latter diverted his force to reconquer the Ægean coast, the crusaders struck bravely across the interior of Anatolia. Despite the unaccustomed heat and a grave shortage of food, they maintained their triumphant advance, routing the Turks at Dorylæum in July, and by September crossing the passes of the Taurus Mountains into Cilicia.

Here, on the very border of the Promised Land, the Latin host began to disintegrate. Encouraged by the Armenian Christians who had recolonized the country, several of the princes now left the main army for the sake of individual conquest. Tancred, nephew of Bohemund, and Baldwin, brother of Godfrey, led bands of followers into Tarsus, where they were enthusiastically welcomed by the inhabitants, but where they nearly came to blows over the possession of the city. At last Baldwin yielded to the Norman strength and shifted operations to the eastward, securing control over various positions on the upper Euphrates. The rest of the crusaders, in the meantime, had advanced to the walls of Antioch. Having no siege engines and being short of necessary supplies, they remained encamped throughout the entire winter of 1097-98. It was not until an Italian fleet arrived in the spring that the city could be closely invested. On June 3 it surrendered, five days before a large relief army was brought up by the emir of Mosul.

The man responsible for the narrow escape of the host was Bohemund, whose negotiations had led to the opening of a gate by a traitor inside the walls. Being a shrewd politician as well as a resourceful general, he had already secured a pledge from the other princes that the one who should make possible the capture of Antioch should be its lord. Bohemund, to be sure, was bound by an engagement to the emperor, but the latter had contributed nothing to the taking of the city and the Norman had no intention of relinquishing his hold. Now the Turkish siege brought another crisis. A party of the faint-hearted, led by Stephen of Blois, actually deserted the host and started for Constantinople. Meeting Alexius, who was advancing with an army from the north, they told him that all was lost. Foolishly he turned back and so threw away his valid claim to Syria, for Bohemund, acting as commander-in-chief, drove off the besiegers by a successful counter-attack on June 28.

The conquest of Antioch (1098)

This battle had momentous consequences for the future of the crusading movement. In the first place, it opened the roads to the south for an easy advance on Jerusalem. Secondly, it produced an open breach between the Latins and the Greeks. Bohemund's title to Antioch was confirmed by the failure of Alexius to bring aid during the critical month of June, and the crusaders' defiance of his sovereignty soon led to the outbreak of active hostilities in Cilicia. Because of the Greek schism, the pope found no occasion to intervene on behalf of the discredited Byzantine government. And since Italian fleets had now established direct contact with Syria, Constantinople no longer dominated communications with the west. The crusade thus became an independent Latin venture, the course of which was to be determined by the generals in the field.

The affair  
of the  
Holy  
Lance

The passing of acute danger at once precipitated a bitter controversy between Bohemund and Raymond of Toulouse. The latter had himself been eager to rule at Antioch and he now, in the face of the whole northern French party, espoused the cause of the emperor Alexius. Furthermore, all the southern French attributed the recent victory not to the generalship of Bohemund, but to the mystic power of the Holy Lance—alleged to be that which had pierced the side of the crucified Christ. As a matter of fact, one Peter Bartholomew, a follower of Raymond, had found a lance in a place said to have been revealed to him by a vision. The discovery had at first produced great enthusiasm among the beleaguered Christians. Subsequently, as the lance became the standard of Raymond's faction, the Normans scoffed at the whole affair, intimating that the southerners had merely uncovered what they had already buried.

This quarrel, together with the outbreak of plague, delayed any further advance for six months. At last Raymond yielded to the general clamor and the march on Jerusalem was resumed in January, 1099. Proceeding down the coast, the crusaders again stopped to lay siege to Archas, a fortress near Tripolis. During the halt, as dissension still raged in the host, Peter Bartholomew agreed to undergo ordeal by fire to prove the truth of his statements. Clad only in a shirt and bearing the Holy Lance, he actually walked through a heap of fiercely blazing olive branches and emerged on the other side. Twelve days later he died—as the consequence, said his friends, of excited handling by the crowd. The Normans, on the contrary, declared that he

had been burned to death. So the dispute continued as before—a remarkable illustration of the strange mixture of religion and politics that characterized the whole crusade.

In spite of all distractions, the Christian host eventually found itself encamped before Jerusalem. Now all was again harmony. And now, thanks to the cooperation of the Italian cities, there was a plentiful supply of materials and trained men for conducting a siege. On July 15, less than six weeks after their first sight of the Holy City, the crusaders stormed its walls, and the principal goal of Urban's magnificent project was attained. One week later Godfrey of Lorraine, whose forces had led the final assault and who had maintained a sort of neutrality throughout the earlier quarrels, was elected and proclaimed Defender of the Holy Sepulcher. Thus, although he never assumed the crown, he actually became the first Latin king of Jerusalem, and on August 12 the success of his rule was assured by his victory at Ascalon over a formidable Egyptian army. Strangely enough, the man chiefly responsible for this dramatic series of exploits survived, but did not live to celebrate its triumphant conclusion. Pope Urban II died at Rome on July 29, just before the glad news arrived that Jerusalem had fallen.

The capture of Jerusalem (1099)

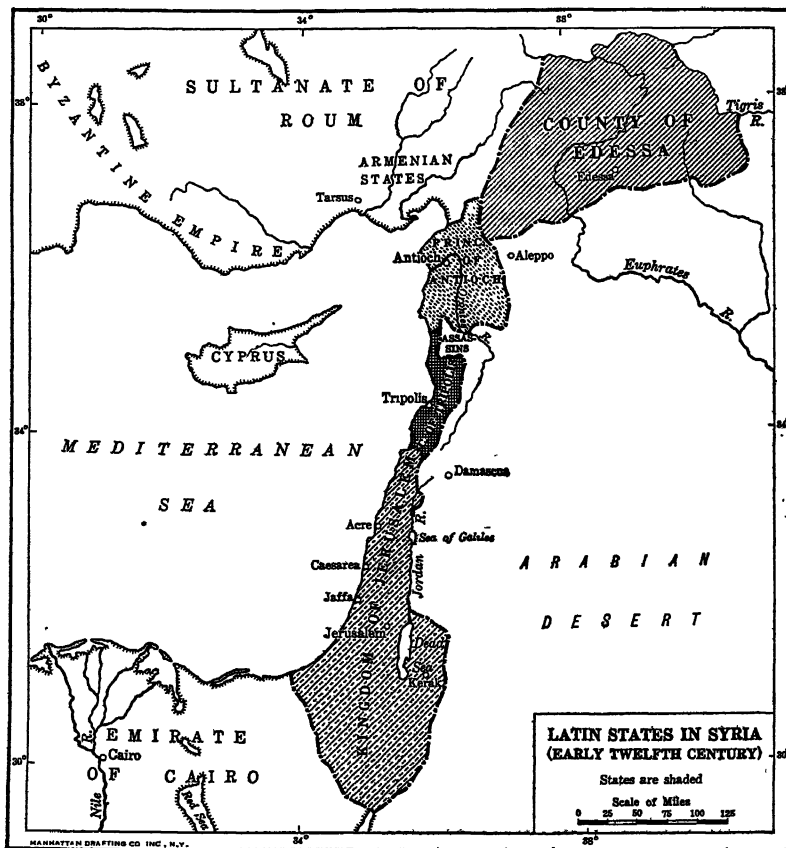
The fame of the crusade had, of course, enormous repercussion throughout Europe. All Christendom rang with the deeds of the great heroes who had participated, and for many generations the force of their example was a potent influence upon the chivalry of the west. In particular, the success of the crusade logically tended to glorify the papacy which had sponsored it, and so contributed greatly to the dominance of the church in the ensuing period. Deepening knowledge of mediæval civilization has, indeed, made it impossible to attribute to the crusade all the major political, economic, and intellectual developments of the twelfth century; in these respects its influence is now seen to have been restricted. Nevertheless, even if the crusade be considered a mere episode in the cultural history of Europe, such an episode richly illustrates the thought and habits of the early feudal age. In itself it was a very great and very wonderful event. Leaving the ultimate significance of the crusade for treatment in subsequent chapters, we may at present attempt merely to summarize the changes which it immediately produced in Asia.

The immediate effect of the crusade

The first of the crusading states to be created was the county of Edessa. As already noted, Godfrey's brother Baldwin left

The Latin  
states in  
Syria

the main host in the autumn of 1097, and, after quarreling with Tancred over control of Cilicia, proceeded, through the friendship of the Armenians, to build for himself a principality on the upper Euphrates. In the spring of 1098, having secured aid from other crusaders, he took the city of Edessa, which thenceforth



remained his capital. Meanwhile the Normans under Tancred had established themselves in Tarsus and the adjoining cities, and after Bohemund had secured possession of Antioch he treated Cilicia as his northern province. This territory, however, was taken by the Byzantines while he was occupied in fighting the Turks; and the war thus begun was continued under his nephew and successor, Tancred. The next conquest of the cru-

saders was Jerusalem itself, which was given to Godfrey of Lorraine as temporal ruler. Eventually a fourth principality centering in Tripolis was set up for Raymond of Toulouse; but since he died before that city was actually taken, it was only his heirs who enjoyed more than a theoretical lordship.

Godfrey, too, was allowed but a brief time in which to hold dominion in Palestine, for he died just a year after his installation as Defender of the Holy Sepulcher. Thereupon his brother Baldwin gave Edessa to a relative and on Christmas, 1100, was crowned king of Jerusalem. At that time his kingdom contained little more than the one city, but under Baldwin's energetic command it was rapidly made into a reality. To the southeast his sovereignty was extended beyond the Dead Sea; to the north the strip of coast between the Jordan and the Mediterranean was occupied as far as Beirut. In the course of this advance vassals were placed in charge of important positions, with rights and obligations determined according to contemporary feudal practice in France. Thus appeared barons with such picturesque titles as Lord of Sidon, Count of Jaffa, and Prince of Galilee. Meanwhile the states of Antioch, Edessa, and Tripolis had been organized in much the same way—each to suit the interests of its own hereditary dynasty. In theory the rulers of these territories were sometimes described as royal vassals; actually, owing to the circumstances of their accession to power, they remained independent princes.

The kingdom of Jerusalem

Too many writers have described the feudalism established in the Latin states of Syria as an idealistic abstraction. It is true that in the thirteenth century, after the Turkish reconquest of the Holy City, a symmetrical set of customs was drawn up by a group of lawyers and labeled the *Assizes of Jerusalem*. Whether they had ever been enforced in Syria is somewhat doubtful, and in any case they did not reflect the original institutions of the crusaders. Men like Bohemund, Tancred, Godfrey, and Baldwin created principalities for themselves by wholly practical means and applied feudal tenures in political organization because they were familiar with no other workable system. Their procedure was no different from that of their contemporaries in England, Spain, Italy, and Sicily. Indeed, when we take into account the handicaps faced from the outset by the western invaders, it is amazing that some of their states lasted for the better part of two centuries. As a military problem, the holding of an extended



coast without control of the plateau on which it bordered was nothing short of desperate. No modern conqueror would consider such a mad enterprise. The odds against these isolated princes were terrific; and yet, as long as reinforcements streamed from the west, they kept what they had taken. On ultimate analysis, it will be found that the success of the crusade was due less to religious enthusiasm than to a very practical alliance between the leaders of the army and the Italian merchants. Logically, therefore, we are brought to the subject of commercial revival in the eleventh century.

## CHAPTER XV

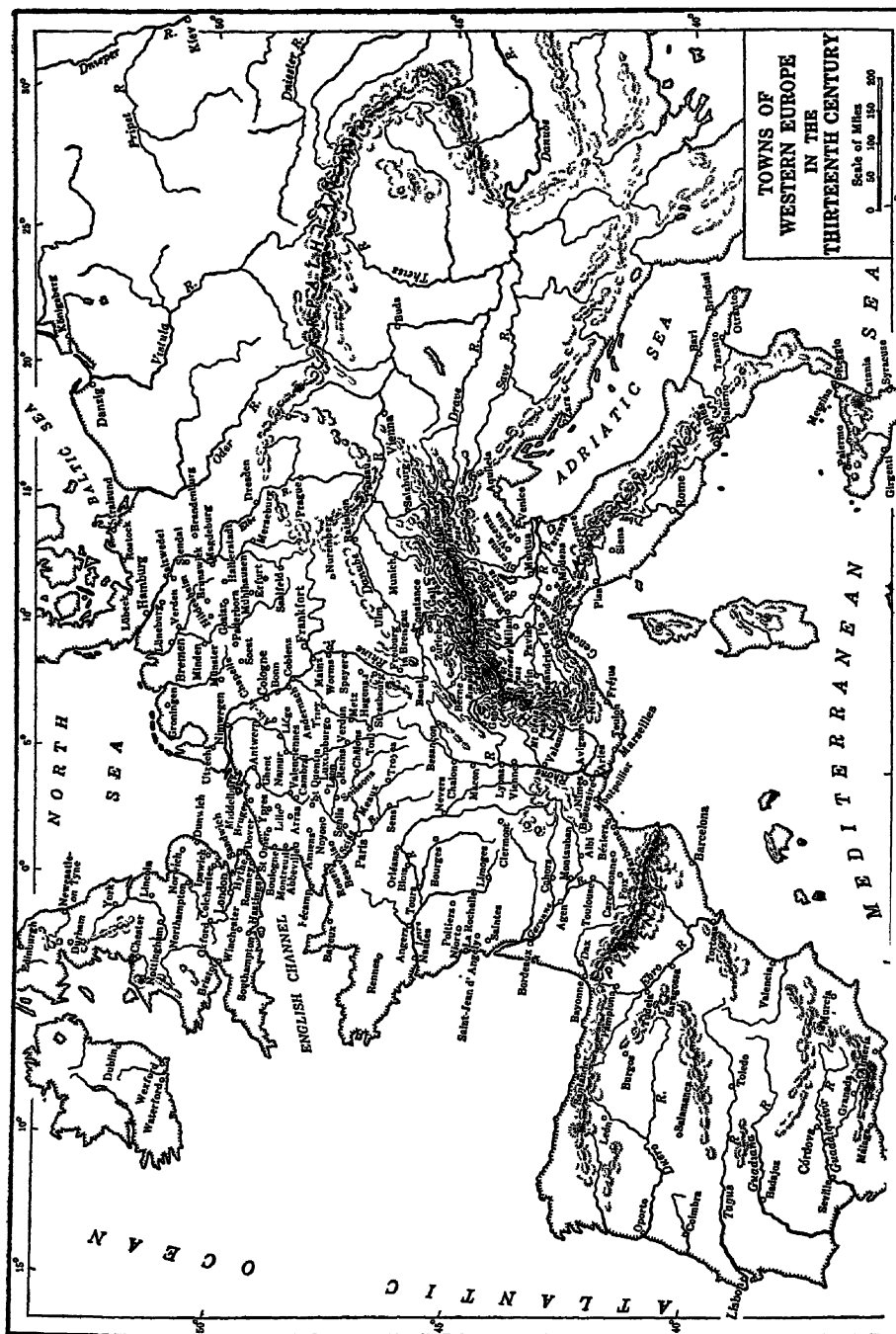
### THE GROWTH OF THE TOWNS

#### I. COMMERCIAL REVIVAL

OF THE many centuries that had elapsed since the disruption of the Roman Empire, the eleventh was the first to witness positive signs of economic recovery in western Europe. One such sign was the increase of population. It was armies of younger sons that made possible the Norman conquests in Britain and Italy, the Christian offensives in Spain, and finally the crusades. During these same years we begin to hear of many projects that indicated a mounting demand for agricultural labor. Wide reaches of waste land were now reclaimed for production by the draining of swamps and the clearing of forests, and this, of course, necessitated extensive colonization. Landlords became willing to issue charters guaranteeing to any settler on particular estates complete exemption from all but fixed rents and stated services. And as such opportunities for an improved livelihood arose, a host of men appeared from somewhere to take them. The inhabitants of the countryside were also multiplying rapidly.

In the later Roman period a vicious cycle of impoverishment and depopulation brought ruin to whole provinces of the empire. Now the reverse process brought renewed prosperity. More jobs made it possible for more people to live, and the demands of these people led in turn to the creation of still more jobs. The cause of this improvement was assuredly no sudden increase in human fecundity. It was not that the men of the eleventh century had more offspring, but that more of their offspring were permitted to survive and have offspring of their own. In part, this happy result was due to better political conditions: the stabilization of society on a feudal basis, the development of more efficient governments, and the cessation of barbarian inroads. Another important factor was undoubtedly the new wealth created by reviving trade and industry. Yet, as usual, when economic phenomena are encountered, it is impossible to say precisely what was cause and what was effect. Perhaps the great future scholar who will positively account for the decay of Rome will also explain the recovery of Europe in the Middle Ages!

Evidences  
of economic  
recovery



At any rate, we have no difficulty in perceiving evidence of increasing commercial activity throughout the eleventh century, and within another hundred years this activity had tended to produce revolutionary changes in virtually every phase of European life. During the Carolingian period, while Byzantine sea power was maintained in the Ægean and the Adriatic, the Saracens gained control of the southern and western Mediterranean. Within the Moslem dominions trade continued to flourish; within western Christendom, in spite of Charlemagne's temporary grandeur, it suffered almost total collapse. The one noteworthy exception was the regular intercourse kept up between Constantinople and the ports of Italy—a connection which was not only maintained in the subsequent period, but greatly strengthened through the rise to power of Venice. Meanwhile a holy war against the Moslem on the sea had been launched by the Genoese and Pisans, who thereby were able to gain rich commercial advantages in Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, and Africa. Then, with the crusade, the Italian merchants found themselves in a position to reopen direct trade with Syria, carrying eastward the armies of pilgrims with their horses and necessary supplies, and bringing westward cargoes of oriental products.

Trade  
routes:  
The Medi-  
terranean

This revival of the old water routes linking Europe and Asia inevitably brought new life to the land routes running north from Italy. The great Roman highways which had been built to join the capital with the provinces included two coast roads: one from Genoa to Marseilles and Spain, the other from Aquileia to Trieste and Dalmatia. Between them extended fanwise two sets of roads across the Alps: those crossing by the western passes to the valley of the Rhone and those crossing by the eastern passes to the upper valleys of the Rhine and Danube. Thence other paved highways paralleled the military frontiers and led through Gaul to the ports of the Atlantic and the North Sea. But the mediæval merchant preferred to travel by water whenever possible. The Garonne, Loire, Seine, Somme, Scheldt, Meuse, and Rhine provided important routes to the west and the northwest. The British Isles were easily reached by ship from across the Channel; two centuries were to pass before direct sea trade was established between them and the Mediterranean.

Overland

Since ancient times, however, enormous changes had been made in the political map of Europe. What had been a wilderness inhabited by savage tribes had now been brought within the pale

North-  
western

of Christendom and, at least to some degree, that of civilization. Germany, in particular, had come to play a prominent part in European affairs, and along the Baltic now extended the dominions of Polish, Russian, Swedish, and Danish princes. In the ninth century the vikings had appeared on the continent as pillagers and destroyers; by the eleventh they had been absorbed into older states or had founded new and vigorous states of their own. With the enrollment of the Scandinavians among the civilized peoples of Europe, their fleets had been diverted from piracy to peaceful trade. Thus the waterways of the viking freebooters now served as commercial links connecting the lands bordering on the Baltic and the North Sea. Furthermore, through the mediation of the Russians, who held the valleys of the Dnieper and other rivers, this region was brought into economic contact with the Black Sea and the Caspian, and so with the Moslem and Byzantine empires.

The commercial importance of Flanders

In the history of the world the commercial prominence of Italy was no new phenomenon. The unprecedented development was rather that which now took place in the northwest. A glance at the map will show how Flanders served as the focal point for all the great routes of the eleventh century. Goods brought by land and water through central France, down the Rhine, westward from the Baltic, or eastward from the British isles, all easily converged on the little county of Baldwin Iron-Arm and his descendants.<sup>1</sup> In Roman times that district had been largely uninhabited—held merely as a military frontier. Now, on the contrary, it rapidly became a great center of population and wealth, a source of enormous power for its fortunate rulers, and for that reason the object of wars and political intrigues that have continued down to our own day. Of secondary economic importance in this region were Picardy, Normandy, the middle Rhine Valley, the Île de France, and England. Central France remained backward, but the Mediterranean littoral, advantageously situated between Spain and Italy, tended to share the prosperity of those two countries.

Towns and trade

The connection between these developments and the revival of urban life in western Europe is obvious. On all sides towns and trade grew together: no important trade route could exist apart from towns, and every great town arose on a trade route.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 246.

The regions characterized by flourishing commerce were also those to become distinguished for the prosperity of their cities. This connection serves to explain many important facts. The outstanding features of town life, which were to have enormous influence on the cultural development of Latin Christendom, were very new in the age of the crusades. By the close of the twelfth century scores of urban communities in western Europe are found enjoying extensive legal privileges, sometimes including rights of self-government. Two hundred years earlier such privileged communities had been non-existent. What amounted to a social revolution had been produced by economic advance during the intervening period. Some writers, it is true, have traced the municipal institutions of the Middle Ages back to Roman tradition or to the primitive customs of the Germans. Careful analysis of the problem tends to show that they have been misled by treacherous words.

We have already seen that the "cities" (*civitates*) of the Dark Age could have been little more than fortified centers of defense and administration.<sup>2</sup> In fact, any position surrounded by an ancient Roman wall—even a deserted legionary fortress—might in those days be called a city. And since the church had regularly installed a bishop in each *civitas*, that term was frequently applied to a place merely because it served as episcopal headquarters. That a given locality continuously bore a Latin name does not prove that it enjoyed any real continuity of urban life. Nor were the *burgen* constructed by kings and princes of the ninth and tenth centuries necessarily what we should call towns. Even under the Roman emperors the German word *burg*, Latinized as *burgus*, had come to be used as a synonym of *castellum*, a small fortress; and in the subsequent period these terms were often used interchangeably with *civitas*. In general, however, *burg* was the name given to a more recent structure—such as those erected by the counts of Flanders against the Northmen or by the German kings against the Hungarians.<sup>3</sup> In England the same word appears as *burh* (borough). A fort of this kind, whether called *burg* or *château* (castle), had few if any urban features.<sup>3</sup>

On the whole, it appears that the cities and *burgen* of western Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries were important chiefly

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 244, 247, 250.

The transformation of old cities and *burgen*

as military positions and centers of government. Even when they included official markets, the latter were insufficient by themselves to support a mercantile population of any considerable size. Some trade, of course, persisted all through the Dark Age, but the professional merchant and the free artisan remained very exceptional. By the twelfth century the situation had been radically changed. Thenceforth, through the influence of revived commerce, a city tended to become what our vocabulary makes it out to be—an especially large and prosperous town. About the same time “borough” (*burg* or *bourg*) acquired the meaning of a privileged urban community, the member of which was known as a burgess, burgher, or bourgeois. That these words all came to denote a townsman, rather than the defender of a fort, was due to the transformation of the place where he lived. Much of the pertinent evidence is contained in charters and other documents which will be referred to in a later section; of recent years much valuable information in this connection has also been obtained through the study of local topography. By examining the traces of early fortifications and other archæological remains, it is possible to prove by a map just when and how a particular town grew up.

Cologne

The Roman city of Cologne, for example, was a walled rectangle of approximately 239 acres, with one side paralleling the Rhine (see Figure 5). In the period following the barbarian invasions the city population dwindled, so that only a small portion of the area within the walls remained inhabited. By the beginning of the eleventh century, however, a settlement of merchants had appeared between the wall and the river. Within another hundred years it had become necessary to fortify three additional suburbs. Then in 1180, a new wall was built to enclose all of the earlier settlements and much besides. Already, therefore, the mediæval town of Cologne had grown to be over twice the size of Roman Cologne—a physical expansion reflecting the contemporary expansion of commerce in that favored locality. Very much the same development can be proved to have taken place in dozens of other ancient cities. It was only rarely that, as in the case of London, the Roman walls contained sufficient ground to accommodate the immigrants that streamed thither during the twelfth century.

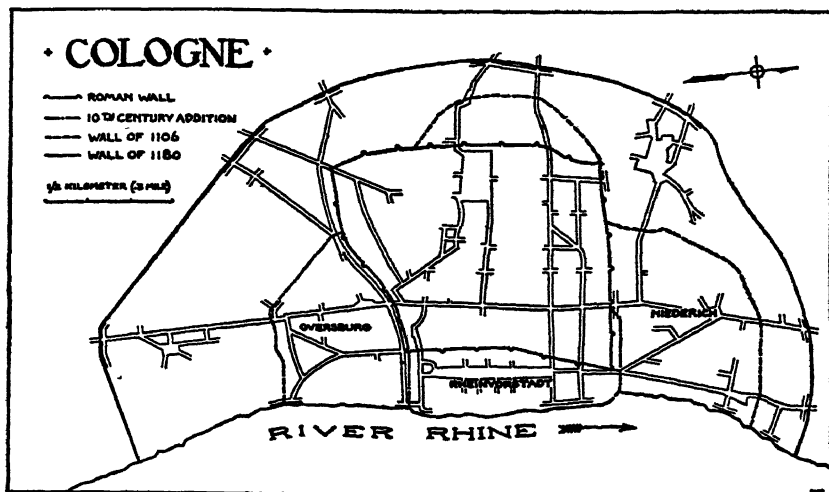


FIGURE 5.—THE EXPANSION OF MEDIEVAL COLOGNE.\*

In those days, it will be noted, the mercantile population was attracted to a place that combined two prime advantages: first, a convenient situation with regard to trade and, secondly, the protection afforded by some kind of fortification. Along routes that had earlier been used by the Romans it was natural that settlements should be formed in or about Roman cities or fortresses. In more recently organized countries, where no such positions existed, towns sprang up about other centers—usually the castles or *burgen* of princes. Particularly fine examples of such development are to be found in the great towns of Flanders, such as Ghent, Bruges, Arras, Ypres, and Saint-Omer. What is still called the Vieux-Bourg (Old Burg) at Ghent was the original fortress of the count, a triangle of about twenty-five acres at the intersection of the Lys and the Liève. But across the former river had appeared by the eleventh century a trading quarter known as the Port or the New Burg, which eventually became what we know as the town of Ghent. When surrounded by fortifications in 1191, it had come to include over two hundred acres, and this was only the beginning of a rapid expansion that continued throughout the mediæval period (see Figure 6).

\* From C. Stephenson, *Borough and Town*; by courtesy of the Mediæval Academy of America.



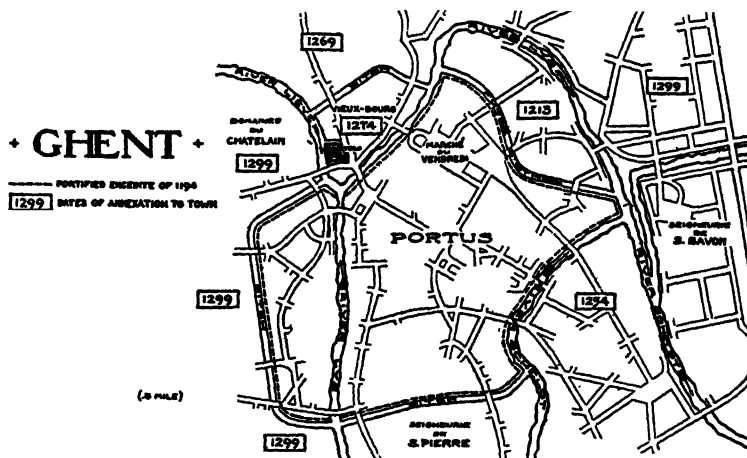


FIGURE 6.—THE EXPANSION OF MEDIÆVAL GHEENT.\*

The town  
as a  
mercantile  
settlement

Beyond the Rhine most great towns of Germany developed, like Ghent, in conjunction with an earlier *burg*—as is often testified by their names (Magdeburg, Merseburg, Quedlinburg, etc.). In England the early history of boroughs like Bristol, Nottingham, Northampton, Oxford, and Norwich seems to have been very similar. Occasionally, in those countries, as well as in France, a fortified cathedral or abbey served as the nucleus for an extended urban settlement—e.g., Durham, Bury St. Edmunds, Saint-Riquier, Vézelay, and St. Gall. But without the vital advantage of a good commercial location, neither church nor castle nor Roman fortress could ever become more than it had been in the earlier age. Towns grew up in mediæval Europe as naturally as they have in modern America,<sup>4</sup> through the operation of economic forces which no one could entirely foresee or control. The princes of the Carolingian age, though celebrated as *burg*-builders, were not true founders of towns. It was the result of historical circumstance that some of their constructions eventually attracted urban populations. Subsequently, after the spon-

\* From C. Stephenson, *Borough and Town*; by courtesy of the Mediæval Academy of America.

<sup>4</sup> Compare, for example, Venice and Chicago, Novgorod and Detroit, Bergen and San Francisco, Nuremberg and Indianapolis. Differences in means of transportation must, of course, be taken into account. There were no railroads in the Middle Ages to affect the growth of inland towns, but the greatest ships then in use could sail up very small rivers. The location of Ghent was relatively as advantageous as that of St. Louis today.

taneous growth of many communities had shown what might happen under favorable conditions, lords often tried to create towns by deliberate planning, and some of these experiments were very successful.

By whatever process the result was attained, the typical town of the later Middle Ages thus appears to have been essentially a mercantile settlement—a colony of persons engaged in commerce and allied activities. Only a restricted number of the inhabitants would be merchants in our sense of the word. The mass of the townsmen would be rather artisans and laborers. Many, in fact, would still be employed in agriculture, for the increase of the urban population inevitably stimulated the production of food and raw materials in the immediate neighborhood. And since transportation by land depended largely on domestic animals, wide pastures remained a vital necessity. In spite of its rural features, however, the town was economically very distinct from the simple village. The town had a continuous market, where an increasing number of persons made a living through buying and selling at a profit. There a craftsman could earn enough for himself and his family by industry alone, and so become entirely independent of any manorial organization. In the smaller towns, which served chiefly as distribution centers for agricultural produce, a limited number of manufacturers could exist merely by supplying the local residents with articles of daily use—such as clothing, leather goods, tools, and food. Occasionally some community, becoming famous for the excellence of its work, would export goods to far-distant lands, and so develop industry on a much larger scale.

Preeminent among such communities came to be the cities of Italy and Flanders, but originally their prosperity depended rather on their location with regard to the great trade routes by sea and land. Business always flourished where cargoes had to be unloaded for trans-shipment, and in this respect seaports or places toward the mouths of rivers tended to have the advantage. For example, we find among the outstanding towns of the Middle Ages Venice, Pisa, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Rouen, Ghent, Liège, Cologne, Bremen, Hamburg, London, York, and Bristol. And it should be noted that important towns like Arras, Bruges, and Lübeck, which the modern map shows apart from navigable water, were actually situated on streams readily ascended by mediæval ships. Much trading continued to be carried on in

Ships

long fast boats propelled by oar, using sails only when the wind was favorable. Such were the galleys of the Mediterranean, as well as the viking ships of the north, and they were all of very shallow draft. For bulky cargo, such as grain and lumber, slow, round-built sailing ships were preferable, but even these remained comparatively small in the northern waters. The largest of the period were those constructed by the Genoese and Venetians in connection with the crusades. They were built with two or even three decks, with raised "castles" at bow and stern for the accommodation of noble passengers; and by the thirteenth century they were sometimes a hundred feet in length, with a breadth of nearly half that amount.

Gilds

During the earlier period we have very little information concerning the life and habits of merchants on land. The roads, we know, were unspeakably bad in all directions, so that wagons were of no use and goods had to be carried on pack animals. Many regions were infested by robbers, and every feudal boundary was made the excuse for the collection of tolls. Under such conditions, merchants became accustomed to travel in considerable bands accompanied, like oriental caravans, by escorts of armed men. Since journeys of this sort entailed careful planning and a considerable outlay of money, they could not be left to the chance meeting of adventurers. The greater undertakings were due to the enterprise of organized groups called gilds, hanses, fraternities, and the like. These merchant associations are first definitely heard of toward the close of the eleventh century, when princes came to guarantee their liberties in formal charters. By that time, however, gildsmen might possess valuable privileges in widely separated countries. At London, for instance, the Flemings, the men of Cologne, and the men of Rouen were enjoying special rights long before the Norman Conquest.

Fairs

The gild thus appears as a prominent feature of reviving commerce in twelfth-century Europe. Another such feature was the fair. The rural market, normally held once a week for the exchange of local produce, played no part in the distribution of articles imported from abroad. The men who engaged in that business needed larger gatherings attended by merchants from all the neighboring towns. Religious festivals might provide occasions that could be turned to profitable advantage by merchants; but commonly the fair was established by a territorial

prince, who guaranteed special protection to all persons coming to a certain place at a certain time every year. Annual fairs, each lasting for a number of days, were eventually organized in series, so that the great traders arranged their trips in order to attend as many as possible.<sup>5</sup> There they disposed of merchandise in large quantities, and there the small dealer obtained stocks for resale or for use in manufacture. The lord of the fair got a handsome revenue by collecting stallage—fees charged for displaying goods in the stalls.

With regard to the articles which were thus distributed, nothing more than a few brief indications can be attempted here. A large proportion of the finer manufactures still came from the Saracen countries of Spain, Africa, and Asia—especially silks, rugs, and other luxurious fabrics; damascened arms and armor;<sup>6</sup> and artistic products in the precious metals, ivory, earthenware, and other materials. The demand for oriental spices, drugs, dyes, perfumes, and gems was enormous, especially after the crusades began. In fact, the derivation of many common words from the Arabic or Persian shows that originally they denoted imports from the east. Thus any word in the following list can be seen to illustrate an interesting chapter in economic and cultural history: sugar, syrup, cotton, gauze, satin, damask (from Damascus), muslin (from Mosul), scarlet (from the cloth of that color), azure (i.e., lapis lazuli), lilac, spinach, artichoke, orange, lemon, apricot, camphor, saffron, alkali, alcohol, lute, and guitar. By the twelfth century, however, the Moslem cities were coming to be rivaled by those of Italy. Venice, in particular, soon became famous for glass-making, metal-working, and other skilled crafts. By that time, too, the woolen cloth of Flanders was finding a ready market throughout Europe.

Other regions of the north and west exported principally food and raw materials. There was everywhere a flourishing trade in salt, which was obtained either from mines or from marshes on the seacoast. Iron was in great demand. Stone and wood were scarce in some regions. French merchants carried wine to England and returned with wool and hides. The Germans from the Baltic brought not only oriental goods that had been transported through Russia, but also furs, lumber, naval stores, and amber. It was in connection with this sort of trade that most

Articles  
of trade

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 504.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 205 n.

towns developed in the twelfth century. Even the greatest of them were still commercial rather than industrial—and they would not seem very great to us. In those days a city of 25,000 was relatively huge. Yet even the smallest trading settlement was sharply distinguished from the villages of the surrounding country.

## 2. ELEMENTARY BOURGEOIS LIBERTIES

The new  
towns of  
north-  
western  
Europe

Many European writers, especially those devoted to legal study, have attempted to show that the towns of their own respective countries were based upon some sort of national trait or custom. Such a notion is unquestionably wrong. The differences that existed among mediæval towns were due not to national or racial peculiarities, but to historical circumstance and environment. Despite political and linguistic variations, the urban institutions of the Middle Ages were fundamentally the same throughout wide regions. It is quite possible, for example, to consider the liberties of townsmen in northwestern Europe as a single subject. On the other hand, it would be hazardous to extend such generalization into the Mediterranean region. The Greek and Moslem cities belonged to worlds that were altogether foreign to the Carolingian lands. Some parts of Italy had never lost contact with the Byzantine Empire. In spite of other differences, northern and southern Spain remained economically akin. And the southernmost provinces of France were in many ways more closely related to Italy and Spain than to the Capetian domain.

In subsequent pages a more comprehensive picture of urban development may be obtained by examining each of these countries separately; as a preliminary, it will be simpler to restrict attention to the northwest. And within that region it will be convenient to begin not with the big towns, but with the little ones. The former, having developed rapidly in the eleventh century, needed no written guarantees of elementary privileges in the twelfth, when such grants became usual. Their charters were commonly restricted to the definition of exceptional or newly acquired rights. For a detailed account of fundamental bourgeois liberties we must rather turn to a *ville neuve*. Such a town was a deliberately planned foundation. Inspired by the example of old and prosperous communities, some prince would seek to establish a similar source of revenue within his own territory. With the advice and financial support of interested business men,

he would select a good site, lay out a market place with streets leading into it, put up a church and other structures, and then offer inducements to prospective settlers by means of a solemn charter.

A document of this sort would naturally emphasize the advantages that townsmen everywhere insisted on. Indeed, if we compare the hundreds of foundation charters that have been preserved, they are found to bear a strong family resemblance. By analyzing several of the earlier grants, we may gain an introduction to all. The first successful experiment in urban colonization to be carried out by a German prince was that of Conrad, duke of Zähringen, for as the result of his efforts, the town of Freiburg-im-Breisgau recently celebrated the eight-hundredth anniversary of its foundation. On waste land adjoining his castle, Conrad in 1120 created a market town, having called together and organized under oath, says his charter, distinguished traders from the neighboring regions. Each settler was provided with a plot measuring fifty by a hundred feet, for which he was to pay a fixed annual rent of one *solidus*.<sup>7</sup> This land he should hold by hereditary right, with the privilege of freely selling it or bequeathing it by will. The community was to be governed only by the custom of trading towns, especially that of Cologne. The inhabitants were to be exempt from all forced entertainment, from all arbitrary exactions, and from all tolls throughout the duke's possessions.

Freiburg-  
im-  
Breisgau

Chiefly because of its location—on the main road running through the Black Forest from the Rhine to the Danube—Freiburg prospered from the first, and its liberties, originally taken from Cologne, were in turn given to many other new towns in southern Germany, notably Colmar and Bern. In the north also, a number of similar foundations were made in the course of the twelfth century, of which the most influential was Lübeck.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, a prominent feature of the German advance into the Slavic country was the continuous establishment of trading settlements modeled after those that had already appeared to the westward. This development, however, hardly reached significant proportions before the thirteenth century, and in the meantime urban colonization had rapidly progressed in France. The first of the

<sup>7</sup> The *solidus* (shilling or *sou*) was a weight of silver pennies (*denarii* or *deniers*). Often, as in England, it was a twentieth of a pound.

<sup>8</sup> See below, p. 405.

Capetians to take an active part in such matters was Louis VI (1108-37),<sup>9</sup> who not only intervened on behalf of the bourgeoisie in many of the episcopal cities, but himself founded the very famous liberties of Lorris.

Lorris

This little town, situated in the vineyard country of the upper Loire Valley, was evidently designed by the king to serve as a center for the wine trade in that portion of his domain. Every man who came there to live was assured by the king's charter of a house and lot at only six *deniers* rent a year. If he resided without challenge for a year and a day, he was thenceforth free and could not be claimed by a previous master. He was to be quit of tallage and forced exactions; of all military service, save for one day within the immediate vicinity; and of all *corvée*, with the exception of certain occasional duties.<sup>10</sup> Whenever he pleased, he could sell his possessions and go elsewhere. He could not be brought to trial outside the town, and there only according to certain specified rules of procedure. Fines and punishments were strictly limited. No one should be molested while coming to or going from the market of Lorris unless he had committed an offense on that same day. Tolls and other stated customs were restricted as to amount and as to mode of collection. The king forbade that any one should take food or materials from the townsmen without just remunerations. Nor should any one be entitled to credit unless it was freely extended. Even the king and queen were to pay their bills inside two weeks.

Mon-  
tauban

The liberties of Lorris proved enormously popular. Extended by various kings to many other small towns in the royal domain, these liberties were also taken by numerous barons as a model for their foundations. So, within the next two centuries, the one set of customs came to be enjoyed by scores of communities in Champagne and Burgundy, as well as in the *île de France*. And Lorris was but one of the many towns whose charters were widely copied throughout northern France. In the south too, new settlements of the same sort were common under the name of *bastides*. Perhaps the most successful of them was that established in 1144 by Alfonse, count of Toulouse. As the consequence of a feud between the abbot of Saint-Théodard and the residents of a bourg adjoining his monastery, Alfonse offered

<sup>9</sup> See below, pp. 370 f.

<sup>10</sup> On these and other manorial obligations mentioned in this chapter, see above, pp. 269 f.

the townsmen a new site on territory of his own. To guarantee their future security, he issued a formal charter, containing the promise of building lots at fixed rents, restriction of tolls, prohibition of various exactions, exemption from forced hospitality, and other familiar provisions. The tenor of the whole charter shows that it was a business arrangement, and it assuredly worked to the benefit of both parties, for the count's little colony became illustrious under the name of Montauban.

Thanks to the matchless records of William I, we can trace back to about 1066 the establishment in England of specially privileged trading communities. From an obscure little Norman *bourg* called Breteuil some of the invading barons borrowed a set of "laws" which they applied to new settlements along the Welsh frontier. And from there the Laws of Breteuil were eventually carried into Ireland. Meanwhile Henry I (1100-35)<sup>41</sup> was instrumental in founding a number of towns—among them Verneuil in Normandy and Newcastle in England. The latter borough, named from the new Norman castle overlooking the river Tyne, received from Henry a grant of liberties destined to have wide influence. If a peasant came to Newcastle and completed the lawful residence of a year and a day, no lord had any further claim on him. The burgesses were entirely exempt from manorial or servile obligations. They could sell or bequeath their lands and were free to come and go as they pleased. Within the borough, together with a certain district outside it, they enjoyed a monopoly of all trading. These liberties of Newcastle were extended to many other towns in the north of England and also, through the favor of the Scottish king, became the standard of urban privilege in his kingdom.

Newcastle-  
on-Tyne

The  
freedom  
of the  
bourgeois

Such charters as we have briefly examined present only the minimum demands of the townsman in the twelfth century. But these demands at once show how great was his superiority over the peasant. First of all, the bourgeois enjoyed free status. No matter what his origin, the man who lived in a town unchallenged for a year and a day secured complete liberty. The town air, it was said, made him free. To be more exact, it was residence on privileged soil that broke any ties of personal or manorial subjection that had bound him to an outside lord. The town was a sort of territorial immunity, created by virtue of some prince's

<sup>41</sup> See below, pp. 373.f.



political authority. It is, therefore, a mistake to explain the mediæval town as a servile community which gradually or suddenly became emancipated. From its very inception the town was a free community. And this legal principle was merely the expression of a social fact, that the mercantile pursuits of the inhabitants were incompatible with serfdom. Settlers would not come to a place as traders or laborers unless they were guaranteed unhampered control of their own bodies and of whatever they might acquire.

Burgage  
tenure

The personal freedom of the bourgeois tended to carry with it exemption from all the typically servile or manorial obligations—such as *mainmorte*, *formariage*, arbitrary tallage, *corvée*, unrestricted military service, and subjection to seignorial monopolies. Whatever services were owed by the townsmen were owed as a community to the common lord, and these services were very generally defined in advance. Under such conditions, a member of the community necessarily held his land by very advantageous terms. Since the holder was not attached to it, he could freely sell it or any part of it; and since it was not burdened with manorial or feudal obligations, he could dispose of it by will. Unlike the acres of the villein or the fief of the noble, bourgeois land was not bound by inflexible rules of inheritance; it could be alienated like an ox or a bale of cloth. This free tenure, peculiar to the bourgeois class, is known by various names in various countries, but in English law is familiar as burgage. That it, rather than any other mediæval tenure, anticipated what we call ownership of real property is obvious.

In general, burgage land was held by a fixed rent in lieu of all service, and this rent was commonly very small. When a new town was founded, the patron was likely to establish it on land which he owned himself; and to attract settlers, he would offer building lots at a nominal rent. So in a great many urban centers the rule prevailed that the townsman's holding was charged with the annual payment of a shilling (*solidus*), or perhaps of only a penny (*denarius*). In the case of a great and rapidly growing city, however, the fortunate owners of surrounding lands could make a handsome profit by selling them to bourgeois for houses and shops, even if the rents placed on the soil were insignificant. At Paris, for example, as a commercial suburb developed on the right bank of the Seine, the belt of marsh that extended to the heights of Montmartre for the first time became

valuable as more than pasture. This fact was soon realized by the clergy who held title to it, with the result that they were upbraided by the pope for giving more attention to the real estate business than to the cure of souls.

Another almost universal feature of early municipal charters was the guarantee to the men of the town that they should not be tried outside it. The reason was that the bourgeois community enjoyed a peculiar law, and to secure its benefits the member had to be exempted from courts which administered justice according to feudal or manorial custom. Townsmen naturally objected to procedure devised for knights or peasants; they demanded forms of action by which debts could be collected, contracts could be enforced, and property rights in land and chattels could be safeguarded. These advantages were obtained in the town court because there the judgment-finders were bourgeois. According to the general practice of the age, the presiding magistrate was appointed by the ruler, but the court itself was made up of leading men from the locality. The actual system of proof and process which thus came to be used in the mediæval towns is too technical a subject to be explained here. Each of the older communities normally had its own usages. When, however, a new town was established, the patron very commonly proclaimed some existing custom as the one which he would uphold. Thus Freiburg-im-Breisgau was given the law of Cologne, and a dozen other places later secured that of Freiburg.

Justice

Select men of the town also took charge, under the superior authority of the lord, of all matters touching commerce and industry. The chief mercantile privilege of the bourgeois was his right to sell freely in the town market. Any one from the outside, even the citizen of a nearby town, was a foreigner, against whom the local tolls served as a protective tariff. Frequently it was provided that certain articles could be manufactured or sold there only by members of that particular community, that they had the first right to purchase certain kinds of imports, or that all merchants coming within a certain region had to display their goods in the town. All these and many other regulations would have to be administered by men familiar with the details of business—in other words, by the same sort of group as that which enforced the law in the court. Often the townsmen were organized in a gild which had charge of all mercantile affairs; in that case the men who controlled local affairs would be its governors.

Mercantile  
privilege

But with or without a gild, the community had to have some sort of informal organization, and from this to a grant of formal self-government transition might be easy.

The lord's interests in the town

In the twelfth century only exceptional towns had any political powers of their own. Under the liberties of Lorris, for instance, all rights of government remained with the king, who merely guaranteed equal justice and protection to the inhabitants. What the bourgeois chiefly wanted was economic and legal freedom—the opportunity to make a living where and as he pleased, without being subject to the arbitrary control of a manorial lord. On his side, the prince who founded the town was swayed by equally practical motives. He had learned from experience that trading communities could not be managed like agrarian estates. He was willing to renounce all the rights objected to by bourgeois populations. He was willing even to provide lands at nominal rents, abandoning to the men who took them the chance of profit on future sales. Yet his action was by no means altruistic. He hoped to make a fortune out of the revenue that would later accrue to him if the settlement flourished. The greater and more prosperous the town, the more he could expect by way of tolls, profits of justice, and other incidentals. Wealthy communities were always glad to pay well for new privileges or for the confirmation of old ones. And by politic negotiation handsome subsidies might be secured from townsmen who appreciated the value of a benevolent patron.

### 3. THE COMMUNES

The meaning of the word commune

The word *communa* in the Middle Ages came to bear various interpretations. Fundamentally it was used, like *communitas* or *universitas*, to distinguish a group of people marked by some common characteristic—such as all residents within a certain place, or all persons engaged in a particular occupation. More specifically, it often had the meaning of a sworn association. Such a society might be formed for a good end, as in connection with the Peace of God,<sup>12</sup> or for an evil purpose, when it would be more in the nature of a conspiracy. Accordingly, when the inhabitants of a town, by taking a solemn oath, formed a league in defense of their rights, they were said to have set up a “commune,” to be praised or denounced according to the writer’s per-

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 332.

sonal attitude. If, finally, the insurrectionaries triumphed and secured legal recognition, their association would be turned into a permanent municipality. So it came about that the word *commune* eventually acquired the meaning of a self-governing town. Some great mediæval towns, it is true, were never called *communes*, and some of those which did bear the name were relatively insignificant. But in general we may quite properly employ the term to distinguish those towns which enjoyed some measure of autonomy.

In this respect the region first to attain prominence was Italy, and, strangely enough, the city which there assumed the leadership was unknown to antiquity. While the older urban centers of the west were threatened with depopulation, Venice took form and prospered. The causes for this exceptional development were chiefly economic. In the sixth century, after Justinian's reconquest of the peninsula, the low-lying district between Istria and the Po was organized as a separate duchy.<sup>13</sup> Earlier its population had been very scanty. Now it became a refuge for thousands of immigrants, for the marshes that fringed the eastward-flowing rivers afforded safer protection against barbarian or brigand than the stone walls of the inland cities. To gain a living in such an environment, the newcomers naturally turned to the established industry of salt-making and to coastwise trade. Then, as the Lombards took Ravenna, the settlements along the Venetian coast found their unbroken connection with Constantinople of tremendous commercial advantage. And this preeminence was definitely assured when Charlemagne abandoned the region to the Byzantine emperor.<sup>14</sup>

The rise of  
Venice

Within the next hundred years an increasing population gathered at Rialto, the lagoon which experience proved to be the most favorably situated—and the illustrious city of Venice was born, as poets have sung, of the sea. Being built on islands and a shore cut by numerous streams, Venice from the outset used waterways for streets. On the west the city was isolated from the mainland by a great expanse of swamp which made it virtually immune from military attack; to seaward lines of sand bars constituted a naval barrier of even greater strength. To some degree Venice thus shared the natural advantages of Constantinople and by the opening of the eleventh century had become undisputed queen

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 189.

of the Adriatic. Although in theory part of the Byzantine Empire, the city was actually a republic, holding dominion over a considerable portion of the coast. The duke of Venetia had now become the doge of Venice—no longer an appointed official, but an elected magistrate who ruled by the advice and consent of the local aristocracy. In every respect Venice acted as a sovereign state; it coined money, signed treaties, and waged war. Venetian fleets assumed an active offensive against the Dalmatian pirates, the Saracens of Sicily, and various rival communities that threatened to invade Adriatic commerce. When the Venetians joined the emperor Alexius Comnenus against the Normans,<sup>15</sup> it was as allies rather than as subjects; and in return they gained the enormous advantage of free trade throughout all the Byzantine possessions, including the city of Constantinople itself.

The urban  
nobility  
of Italy

In northwestern Europe at this time the feudal nobility was essentially an agrarian class, living in the country and despising town dwellers as social inferiors—a chivalrous prejudice that still clings to the word *bourgeois*. Venice, on the contrary, remained loyal to the traditions of antiquity. The aristocratic families of Venetia identified themselves with the rising city. They lived in it, ruled it, and prospered with it, investing their wealth in ships and mercantile enterprise. As at Constantinople, legal and economic institutions could be traced back by direct continuity to imperial Rome. Though hardly emerging until the ninth century, Venice was a true city-state of the type made famous by the Greeks. To a lesser degree the same consideration holds true for the other cities of Italy. In all of them the local nobles, despite their feudal titles, played a prominent part throughout the Middle Ages. Even those who originally held aloof from the communal movement were eventually drawn or forced into it. This fact alone gives to the social history of Italy a character that sharply distinguishes it from that of Germany or France or England.

Genoa and  
Pisa

Nevertheless, it was not the landed aristocracy that really created the splendor of the Italian cities in the later Middle Ages, but the humbler citizens engaged in trade and industry. The great political changes that revolutionized Italy between the tenth and the twelfth centuries can be understood only by taking into

<sup>15</sup> See above, p. 330.

account the contemporary revival of commerce. Although economic ties with Constantinople stimulated the early development of Venice, it was rather the opening of new markets to the north and west that led to its amazing expansion in the age of the crusades. So, at the same time, Genoa and Pisa rose to great prosperity without the advantage of a Byzantine connection. While the sea belonged to the Saracens these cities remained obscure. Then, as the Moslem power weakened, they assumed the leadership of a Christian offensive in the western Mediterranean. By 1095 their fleets had gained control of the European coast from Sicily to Barcelona; they held the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, and they enjoyed special rights in northern Africa. From the very beginning the Genoese and Pisans gave active support to the crusade. As we have seen, their ships saved the Christian host before Antioch and later made possible the capture of Jerusalem. Their reward was the allotment of trading quarters in the towns of the Syrian coast and a series of valuable concessions from the princes of the newly organized Latin states. This success ended the earlier hesitation of the Venetians, who now joined their western rivals in the profitable business of transporting pilgrims and exploiting the Christian conquests.

Meanwhile Genoa and Pisa had tended, like Venice, to become autonomous republics. Before the end of the eleventh century both cities appear as communes, governed by groups of elected magistrates styled consuls. By that time, or within the next few years, the same result had been attained in a host of other north Italian towns—such as Siena, Florence, Lucca, Milan, Pavia, Brescia, and Bologna. Each of these municipalities had, of course, its own history, influenced by peculiarities of local custom and the varying attitude of persons in authority. In general, however, the commune arose as a sworn association of citizens—both noble and plebeian—for the maintenance and extension of their liberties. Though occasionally it might be formed with the consent and support of the existing government, it was more frequently a revolutionary organization which achieved its ends by means of insurrection. When, as was generally the case in Lombardy, the city had been legally subordinated to the bishop, the outbreak was primarily directed against his power. But the commune might also be employed as an effective weapon against a lay prince. Whatever the preliminaries, the ultimate result was the establishment of a *de facto* republic based on a league of citi-

The Lombard and Tuscan communes

zens sworn to advance their common interests by persuasion, boycott, or force of arms.

In the absence of an efficient monarchy, northern Italy thus became a mosaic of city-states. Each of the Lombard and Tuscan communes, like Venice and Genoa, held control not merely of the walled area, but of a considerable district outside, which the commune sought to expand by annexing the castles, country estates, and lesser towns of the neighborhood. Such an aggressive policy was dictated largely by commercial considerations—the necessity of controlling highways, streams, passes, and other essentials of economic independence. The situation was further complicated by the antagonistic ambitions of noble families, who maintained bitter feuds with rivals in the country, in other communes, and even in their own commune. This warlike character of the influential citizens was reflected in the most prominent buildings of the typical Italian city—the fortress-like palaces, each constructed to house a whole clan and provided with a huge tower from which to spy out the movements of the enemy.

The  
northern  
communes

The complete sovereignty of the cities, together with the chronic strife which it entailed, remained characteristic of Italy for many centuries. In other countries the development of the towns was more closely dependent on the powers and sympathies of the greater princes. The restricted authority of the French king allowed him to exercise direct control only over the towns in his own domain. Similar rights were enjoyed within their respective territories by all his great barons, among whom the more important as founders of towns were the rulers of Flanders, Normandy, Aquitaine, and Toulouse. These princes, while carefully preserving their political supremacy, showed themselves generally favorable to the ambitions of the bourgeoisie. The same was true of the Norman duke's policy in England. In Germany, on the other hand, the emperors habitually gave their support to the bishops, and the latter tended, like their brethren in France and Italy, to oppose the extension of urban liberties.

Flanders

By the early twelfth century, as already remarked, flourishing towns had grown up about various *burgen* in Flanders, especially at Ghent, Bruges, Arras, Ypres, and Saint-Omer. These communities—or communes, as they are sometimes called—had then come to enjoy considerable powers of self-government, as well as the elementary bourgeois liberties enumerated above. By entirely peaceful arrangement, each had now secured permission to elect

its own *échevins*<sup>16</sup>—magistrates who, under the superior authority of the count, had charge of the local administration. Each town, furthermore, seems to have had a gild merchant,<sup>17</sup> which included all persons who were there engaged in trade. The gild, under its own officers, thus held a virtual monopoly of business in the locality, regulating all such matters as tolls, rights of sale or purchase, and standards of manufacture. For such purposes the members had regular meetings in their gildhall. Frequently, too, this building served as headquarters for the municipal government—a natural arrangement, since the same men would be in control of both organizations. The gildsmen, however, did not always spend the evening in serious debate—as we learn from a remarkable Saint-Omer document of about 1100. Every so often the gild held a wine-drinking, from which no brother could absent himself without good excuse. When he came into the hall, he had to leave at the door not merely his arms, but likewise his wooden shoes—lest they be used as weapons. And a tariff of penalties was applied to offences that disturbed the drinking—including blows with the fist, with a stone, or with a loaf of bread!

In contradistinction to the Flemish communes, those of Picardy very generally rose to power through violence. That region was sprinkled with many old Roman cities, which earlier had been little more than fortified centers of administration under the resident bishops. By the opening of the twelfth century, however, most of these cities had attracted a considerable population of merchants and artisans, who commonly occupied separate quarters beyond the ancient walls. And as the bishops, or other lords, refused to meet the demands of their bourgeois, the latter rose in revolt, forming sworn associations much like those of Lombardy. The first such revolutionary commune in the north was that of Cambrai in 1077. Although this rising was put down, a later insurrection was more successful. The townsmen then forced the bishop to grant them a communal charter, which was quashed only when, in 1107, the emperor intervened on the side of the church. Many more years passed and much more trouble ensued before the city obtained definite recognition of its liberties. Meanwhile the example set by Cambrai was widely followed throughout the region to the south. One after another,

<sup>16</sup> In Latin, *scabini*. The name had earlier been applied to the judgment-finders in a territorial court; see above, p. 193.

<sup>17</sup> "Merchant" is an adjective. The expression means a gild of merchants.



rebellions broke out in Saint-Quentin, Amiens, Laon, and Beauvais. Some failed and some succeeded, but sooner or later these towns and many others throughout the neighboring region secured recognition as communes under elected magistrates.

In many cases the troubles of the northern cities were ended through the intervention of Louis VI, who restored order by arranging some sort of compromise. On the whole, his policy clearly favored the bourgeoisie, for his settlements tended to break the effective government of the cities by the bishops and to substitute that of the citizens under his own superior control. Eventually, after the revolutionary phase had passed, the Picard communes came to be organized quite like those of Flanders—normally under a board of elected officials called *jurés*.<sup>18</sup> Every resident was bound by oath to obey his magistrates and to lend aid to the enforcement of their judgments. Any townsman who refused to do so was declared a public enemy and subjected to the penalty of having his house torn down. Or should a noble of the countryside deny justice to a member of the commune and defy its authority, the citizens would be assembled in the market place by the ringing of a great bell and all would march forth to take vengeance on the common foe. Such provisions as these are usual in the communal charters, and they show how, in the feudal society of the early twelfth century, the individual bourgeois was helpless without an armed union to support him.

Normandy  
and  
England

In Normandy we have clear evidence that the merchants of Rouen were organized as a powerful gild even before the duke's conquest of England. From Henry I the city apparently received at least some political rights, but it is only at a later time that we definitely learn of a communal administration headed by a group of elected *jurés*. In his island kingdom Henry also gave a remarkable charter to London—the first known grant of formal self-government to an English town. In this respect, as in all others, the rest of the boroughs lagged far behind the metropolis. Until the closing years of the twelfth century, most of them enjoyed only the elementary liberties of free status, burgage tenure, and the like. Almost every English borough had its gild merchant, through which, in some degree, the burgesses might actually control their local affairs. In this connection, too, should be mentioned the league of the Cinque Ports. As the name im-

<sup>18</sup> That is to say, "men sworn" to act as representatives of the community.

plies, there were originally five (Hastings, Sandwich, Dover, Romney, and Hythe), but later the number was increased. According to a custom dating from the reign of Edward the Confessor, each of them was bound to furnish the king a certain number of ships for fifteen days' service annually, and in return enjoyed freedom from toll throughout England, together with other privileges. Under the Normans the Cinque Ports gained even more extensive liberties, and eventually all became self-governing. From this unique organization directed by the constable of Dover Castle, the king secured a regular navy all through the Middle Ages.

In twelfth-century Germany the most advanced town, both economically and politically, was Cologne, where, by way of exception, municipal development seems to have continued without serious opposition from the local bishop. Before 1100 the city had a flourishing gild merchant, and within the next fifty years a communal organization under elected magistrates took form. The other cities of the Rhine Valley—such as Mainz, Trier, Worms, Strasbourg, Frankfort, Constance, and Basel—became self-governing only in the following century. The same statement will apply to the leading towns of the Danube, headed by Ratisbon, and of eastern Germany, where the foremost urban center was Magdeburg. As yet the only great town of Holland was Utrecht, and on the Meuse Liège was hardly rivaled by Namur and Verdun. Most of Lorraine, in fact, remained comparatively backward—as did the central region of the Burgundies, Champagne, and Auvergne. The towns on the upper Seine and Loire—even Paris and Orléans—were of second rank as late as 1200. Brittany had no towns of any considerable size. Along the Bay of Biscay, however, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, and Bayonne were becoming important for sea trade, especially in wine.

Throughout Toulouse and Provence, meanwhile, the revival of commerce in the western Mediterranean naturally brought new life to such Roman cities as Marseilles, Arles, Nîmes, Béziers, Montpellier, Narbonne, and Carcassonne. By the middle of the twelfth century at least a dozen of these towns had peaceably obtained extensive liberties from their respective lords, usually lay nobles. Following the example of the Italian cities, they installed magistrates with the title of consuls, and in other respects many of them resembled the southern rather than the northern communes. In Spain, too, municipal organization tended to

Germany

Southern  
France  
and Spain

be of the Italian type. It is true that many small trading settlements grew up under the protecting walls of castles, and some of them became prosperous enough to receive formal charters like those given to northern towns. But the Spanish nobles, like those of Italy, continued by preference to live in the great cities which, through the influence of the constant warfare against the Moors, remained especially important as military centers. Of those in Christian hands before 1200, the only one to attain prominence in European commerce was Barcelona.

The preceding pages have, of course, merely introduced a very large and complex subject. In the history of the mediæval town the twelfth century was the formative period. Further details concerning urban life and institutions must be left for a subsequent chapter. Meanwhile it should be noted that in all the great states of Europe the bourgeoisie came to exert a powerful influence on constitutional development and on political affairs generally. This influence will be apparent as we review the history of the French, English, German, and Italian kingdoms.

## CHAPTER XVI

### FRANCE AND ENGLAND: THE RISE OF THE CAPETIANS

#### I. LOUIS VI AND HENRY I

IN AN earlier chapter the story of the French monarchy was dropped at the time of Philip I.<sup>1</sup> While witnessing great exploits on the part of his barons in England, Spain, Italy, Sicily, and the Holy Land, he lived to a dishonored old age, to die finally in 1108. Like his contemporary, Henry IV of Germany, Philip spent many years under papal excommunication; but unlike the headstrong emperor, he gained the distinction through sheer apathy. It may, indeed, be said that Philip's only great accomplishment was the begetting of his son Louis. That prince, by admirably combining valor and industry, high ideals and common sense, opened a new age in the history of France. With Louis VI the Capetian dynasty began a splendid career, which was to culminate six hundred years later in the gorgeous reign of Louis XIV.

The  
French  
kingdom  
about 1100

At the opening of the twelfth century, however, the prospects of the royal house seemed by no means brilliant. The king still possessed the theoretical rights of the Carolingians: he was supposed to be the protector of the church, the fountain of justice, and the commander of the nation in arms. Actually, the royal authority had long since been divided among a dozen great dukes and marquises. For two centuries the king had ceased to have any direct contact with the French people as a whole, either lay or clerical. His effective government was restricted to the Île de France. Even there his resources were meager. A long, narrow territory, devoid of seaports and natural frontiers, the royal domain was hemmed in on all sides by the states of powerful and unscrupulous barons. To make the situation worse, the king had little control over his immediate subordinates—the *prévôts* who collected his revenues and the *châtelains* who held his castles. In every direction lawless vassals made the roads unsafe for travel and terrorized the churches of which the king acted as patron. Obviously, before the Capetian could hope to extend

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 275.

his influence throughout the kingdom, he would have to make himself master of his own principality. It was to this task that Louis VI devoted his life.

Louis VI  
and the  
pacifica-  
tion of the  
royal  
domain

Louis is described by contemporaries as tall and handsome—an athlete, passionately fond of riding and hunting, and a brave soldier. He was also a huge eater. In his later years he put on so much flesh that he gained the nickname of *le Gros*; but even as Louis the Fat, he remained extremely active. His reign actually began before the death of his father: at eighteen he had already been knighted, associated in the royal office, and placed in charge of military operations on the Norman frontier. As soon as his defenses on that side had been put in better condition, he turned to the unspectacular but highly essential work of pacifying his domain. Year after year the indefatigable Louis assembled a small force and launched a campaign against some obstreperous official or robber baron. Gradually the royal cause triumphed. By 1120 the king could again move about in the Île de France without an army to cut a passage. His castles were placed in charge of loyal vassals. Revenue once more flowed steadily into his treasury. Peasants and traders joined the clergy in fervent thanks to God for a virtuous and able king.

In connection with this work, Louis developed an active policy of stimulating new economic projects. Like other progressive lords of the day, he issued special charters to attract cultivators to his waste lands. The colonist, or *hôte*, who would settle in some particular region was promised a status very superior to that of the ordinary villein: he should be exempt from all arbitrary exactions, held only for a small rent and strictly defined services. Much wider liberties, as we have seen, were established by the king at Lorris,<sup>2</sup> whence they were extended into many other small towns. To Paris and Orléans, as to most places under his immediate authority, he made no formal grants of self-government; but on ecclesiastical territory he helped to found communes at Laon, Amiens, Beauvais, Noyon, Soissons, Corbie, and Saint-Riquier. The alliance between monarchy and bourgeoisie, which was to be of tremendous importance throughout the later history of France, was essentially the product of Louis VI's reign.

Except for his intervention on behalf of the communes, which was a matter of recognizing the inevitable, Louis remained a

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 356.

staunch friend of the church. Throughout the better part of his reign, in fact, he had the support of the greatest clergyman in France, Suger. The latter began life as a peasant, but as a youth entered a monastery. Having acquired a considerable reputation for learning, he was appointed instructor to Prince Louis. Through this friendship, and through his own extraordinary talents, Suger came to be adviser to the king and, in 1122, abbot of Saint-Denis, one of the great religious houses near Paris. So, with regard to his own career, he quoted Psalm 113:

Suger  
(d. 1151)

He raiseth the poor out of the dust and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that He may set him with princes.

Suger, as will be seen in the following section, actually governed France for many years under Louis VII and continued to play a prominent part in all affairs of state until his death in 1151. From his letters and other writings he gives us a vivid picture of contemporary politics, as well as of his daily cares in the great royal abbey of Saint-Denis. It was not the least of his distinctions that he directed the building of the first great church to be planned throughout in the new Gothic style.<sup>3</sup>

While consolidating his position within the royal domain, Louis VI by no means neglected opportunities to interfere in affairs touching the great fiefs. In this respect, however, his resources were inadequate to win him any lasting success. No new territories were brought under the king's direct control and his princely vassals continued to act very much as they pleased. When left to their own devices, they treated the king with respect, occasionally appearing before him to perform homage or to take part in a solemn convocation of his feudal court. Yet there is no evidence that they ever paid him reliefs or aids, and the military service which they gave him was quite nominal. Earlier we have had occasion to review the political subdivisions of France under the early Capetians. Throughout the first half of the twelfth century conditions remained fundamentally unchanged.

Louis and  
the great  
fiefs

On the extreme south Catalonia was united in 1137 to the kingdom of Aragon and so, though nominally remaining part of France, actually broke away from it. Between the Pyrenees and the Loire extended the great duchy of Aquitaine, which now included that of Gascony. Until 1127 its ruler was the remarkable

Southern  
France

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 481.

William IX. Being widely criticized for his lack of crusading ardor, he finally led an expedition to the east, but was badly beaten by the Turks in Asia Minor and returned home to pursue his more congenial career as a troubadour.<sup>4</sup> On his death he was succeeded by his son, William X. And when the latter was stricken by mortal illness in 1137, he expressed the desire that his daughter and heiress should be married to the son of Louis VI—a great tribute to the enhanced prestige of the monarchy and, as will be seen below, a momentous decision in more ways than one. Along with his magnificent principality, William passed to his successors the unfinished project of conquering Toulouse. That county, in fact, had barely escaped absorption into Aquitaine on several occasions. Raymond IV, the famous crusader, never returned from the Holy Land, and after him two sons and a grandson sought to make good their claim to Tripolis. In theory their pious undertakings were supposed to bring immunity to their possessions at home; actually their protracted absences served only to encourage their rivals.

Northern  
France

In the north of France, meanwhile, four great states were engaged in a bitter struggle for supremacy: Flanders, Normandy, Anjou, and Blois. Burgundy still remained comparatively obscure under a branch of the Capetian house, and Brittany continued to be little more than a scene of barbarous warfare. Champagne and Blois had for a time been separated, but in 1125 both fiefs were again united under Thibaut IV, the implacable enemy of Louis VI. Thibaut's father was the Stephen of Blois who had taken the cross in 1095; his mother was a daughter of William the Conqueror. And it was through this connection that his younger brother, also named Stephen, secured the crown of England in 1135. On the one hand Blois had a bitter enemy in the Capetian monarchy, on the other in Anjou. The count of that territory in the early twelfth century ended the civil wars that had recently paralyzed the country and so prepared the way for the brilliant success of his son and successor, Geoffrey Plantagenet<sup>5</sup> (1129-51). To understand his fortunes, we must turn to the history of Normandy.

William the Conqueror died in 1087, leaving Normandy to his eldest son, Robert, and England to his second son, William. His

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 453.

<sup>5</sup> So called from the broom flower that he was accustomed to wear. It was his personal nickname and was not borne by his descendants.

The Nor-  
man suc-  
cession

third son, Henry, as yet had nothing beyond a sum of cash. William II, or William Rufus, as he is commonly known, proved himself an able though unscrupulous king. Crushing an insurrection of discontented barons, he stoutly maintained the authority left him by his father. Indeed, by pushing his rights to unprecedented extremes, he soon gained an evil reputation for tyrannical and extortionate government. The church in particular complained that, when prelates died, William deliberately prolonged the vacancies for the sake of incidental revenue.<sup>6</sup> After the death of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury under William I, we are told that the king was induced by what he thought a mortal illness to appoint the learned Anselm, and that, when he recovered, he sorely repented his piety. William fought with success against the Welsh and the Scots, reestablishing the lordship which his father had asserted over those countries. Of greater importance was his occupation of Cumberland and Westmoreland, which thus extended the northwest boundary of England to the point where it has since remained. Meanwhile there had been intermittent war between William and his brother Robert, which was interrupted only by the latter's assumption of the cross in 1095. And before he had returned from the crusade, William was accidentally killed while hunting in 1100.

The chief gainer by this misadventure was Henry, who for years had been living quietly in England, hoping for a favorable turn of events. Quickly he seized the opportunity that was now afforded. Taking possession of the royal treasury, he secured the support of the chief barons by pledging a reformed administration, and inside two days was solemnly crowned king of England. As part of the bargain just effected, he then issued his famous Coronation Charter, promising to abolish all the abuses that had characterized his brother's government. Some of the articles were too vague to be of any practical value—such as the one stating that only “just reliefs” should henceforth be taken from heirs. Others included very specific engagements, but we have positive evidence from later records that the king generally broke his word. For example, Henry's promise never to take anything from the demesnes of the church during a vacancy in abbacy or bishopric seems to have been utterly disregarded. His Coronation Charter, accordingly, did not open

Henry I,  
king of  
England  
(1100-35)

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 256.



a new epoch in English constitutional history; it served merely as a useful reminder that the king had once recognized limits to his authority.

Duke of  
Normandy  
(1106)

Henry, as a matter of fact, never dreamed of himself as a capricious despot. He held loyally to the fundamental customs established by his father, strengthening his monarchy not by usurpation, but by statesmanlike development of existing institutions. One of his first acts after securing power was to marry Edith, daughter of the Scottish king and on her mother's side a descendant of Alfred. This alliance was shrewdly calculated to make him popular with the native English; and to please the Normans, the lady's name was changed to Matilda (Maud). In the meantime Robert, duke of Normandy, had returned from the crusade and he at once provoked an insurrection of the more turbulent barons in England. Robert, however, was notoriously incompetent, and the intrigue merely gave Henry a good pretext for extending his ambitions to the continent. After a long series of minor quarrels in which the French king vainly supported the elder brother, Henry won a decisive victory at Tinchebrai in 1106. Robert spent the rest of his life in prison, while Henry thenceforth held undisputed sway throughout all his father's dominions.

Relations  
with  
Louis VI

Louis VI, making the best of a situation which he could not control, received Henry I as his vassal for Normandy. But relations between the two continued strained, and before long they were embroiled in a war that lasted for the better part of twenty years. Throughout this struggle Henry maintained his position with complete success, securing recognition of his overlordship in Brittany and extending his authority over certain disputed territory on the Seine. Hitherto the French king had regularly depended on the count of Anjou for aid against the Normans, and Henry had countered by allying with Louis's bitter enemy, the count of Blois. In 1128, however, there was a surprising diplomatic reversal. Some years earlier Henry's two sons had both been drowned by the tragic sinking of the *White Ship* in the British Channel; so the king was left with only a daughter, Matilda, already married to the emperor, Henry V. In 1125 the latter died and Matilda was brought home, to be solemnly recognized by the barons as heiress of both Normandy and England. Then, to assure the lady powerful support, Henry gave her in marriage to Geoffrey Plantagenet of Anjou, who in the next year

(1129) inherited his father's county. Finally, in 1133, the aging king was delighted by the news that he had a grandson, who was to be named for him and who, it might be expected, would in time rule the combined states of England, Normandy, and Anjou.

Nevertheless, when Henry died in 1135, most of his barons refused to carry out the settlement to which they had earlier pledged support. Recognition of the infant Henry was out of the question. As good Normans, they hated to submit to their ancient enemy, the Angevin, and they did not like the idea of being ruled by the ex-empress. This was the situation when a claim to the succession was raised by Stephen of Blois, brother of Count Thibaut and grandson of the Conqueror. Being well known to the magnates and personally popular, he received their support and was crowned. War with Anjou thus became inevitable, while Stephen's weakness soon encouraged the outbreak of widespread civil disorders in both England and Normandy. Once more fortune favored the French king, but Louis VI did not live to profit by the opportunity. Dying in 1137, he left the throne to the son who had already been associated in the royal dignity and who, by a lucky marriage, had just acquired the magnificent inheritance of Aquitaine. With such prospects, how could Louis VII avoid winning for his house a dominant position in western Europe?

Stephen,  
king of  
England  
(1135-54)

The new king, it soon appeared, utterly lacked the statesmanship of his father. Virtuous and lovable in personal character, he seemed never able to adopt a sensible policy, flying from one impractical scheme to another and constantly ruining fine prospects by stupid blunders. At the beginning of his reign much, of course, might be pardoned him on the score of youth; but unhappily for his country, Louis never developed a keen intelligence. Although the experienced Suger might save the royal cause in some respects, he could not do everything. During the crucial years between 1137 and 1145 the king seemed blind to the menace that threatened him from Anjou. Having wasted his energies in futile quarrels with the pope and with the count of Blois, he then chose to desert his kingdom for a poorly managed crusade.<sup>7</sup> After the total failure of his expedition to Syria, he finally returned home and was fortunate enough, thanks to Suger, to find his domain intact.

<sup>7</sup> See below, p. 522.

## 2. HENRY II AND THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION

The rise  
of the  
Angevin  
power

The question of the Norman inheritance had, of course, to be settled on the battlefield, for Stephen's succession was immediately challenged by the Angevins. While Geoffrey undertook the reduction of Normandy, the dauntless Matilda led an army across the Channel. There she fought the English king with varying success until, in 1148, she abandoned the campaign as hopeless. By that time her husband had achieved his objective. As Stephen's party on the continent had never been strong, and as Louis VII made no effort to intervene, Geoffrey steadily pushed his occupation of Normandy, finally taking Rouen in 1144. This conquest he carried out in the name of his son Henry, and in 1150 the seventeen-year-old boy was actually invested with his grandfather's duchy. Then, in the next year, Geoffrey died and Henry came into possession of Anjou. Louis VII, having permitted Geoffrey to complete his project without the slightest interference, could not refuse to accept the homage of his heir for the two great fiefs.

As it turned out, Henry's good fortune had only begun. The year 1151 saw the death of Suger; and the king, as if to celebrate his independence, proceeded to his crowning folly—the divorce of his wife. Eleanor, the granddaughter of a famous troubadour, had been brought up in an atmosphere of romantic gallantry. Perhaps she chafed under the restraints of the somewhat barbarous court at Paris and the growing indifference of her spouse. At any rate, during the course of the crusade, Louis was shocked by her flirtatious conduct and now, in 1152, he prevailed upon the ecclesiastical authorities to declare the marriage void because of an alleged blood-relationship between the pair. Possibly the fact that the queen had as yet failed to bear a son also had weight with the king. Whatever his motive, Louis deliberately repudiated not only Eleanor, but Aquitaine as well. To make the situation infinitely worse, the affronted lady found revenge by marrying, just two months later, the young Henry of Anjou. On the side of the groom, assuredly, it was no love match, for he was some ten years her junior. It was, however, a masterpiece of political strategy, and since his queen gave him no less than five sons and three daughters, it assured the future of the dynasty.

Strangely enough, although war had already broken out between the two, Louis in 1152 granted Henry a truce, which he

used for an attack upon Stephen in England. The latter, having no stomach for fighting, at once agreed to recognize Henry as heir to his crown—an arrangement that was peacefully carried out when Stephen died in the very next year. By 1154 Henry II, as he may henceforth be called, thus combined under his personal dominion an impressive territory, extending on the continent from the Atlantic to the imperial border along the Rhone and from the Pyrenees to Flanders. As duke of Aquitaine he held a claim to the county of Toulouse, which from time to time he later tried to make good. As duke of Normandy, he enjoyed the overlordship of Brittany. This title, in itself, meant little, but the subsequent marriage of his third son, Geoffrey, to the heiress of the county offered at least the possibility of important consequences. As king of England, finally, he asserted a theoretical superiority over the Welsh princes to the west and the Scottish king to the north.

Henry II  
of England  
(1154-89)

In Scotland the twelfth century marked a great advance of civilization. David I (1124-53), who had been brought up in England, largely reorganized the kingdom on a feudal basis. The English-speaking lowlands<sup>8</sup> had already come to include many Norman-French adventurers; under David a host of others carried their influence even into the Celtic highlands. At this same time the customs of Norman-French trading settlements were extended to the Scottish boroughs by granting them the liberties of Newcastle-on-Tyne.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile the Welsh had likewise been pushed farther and farther back into their rocky peninsula. Especially along the northern shore of Bristol Channel, the Norman barons of the frontier, the famous Lords Marchers, built up a series of little feudal states from Cardiff to Pembroke. And as the invaders raised their castles, they founded many new towns, commonly endowed with the laws of Breteuil.<sup>10</sup> Under Henry II Norman aggression was not only continued on these two fronts, but also extended into Ireland.

Scotland  
and Wales

That island, in the course of the ninth century, had been ravaged from end to end by the vikings, some of whom had founded permanent settlements along the east coast. Afterwards the Scandinavians, adopting Christianity and mixing with the native popu-

Ireland

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 283.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 357.

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 357.

lation, had tended to become indistinguishable from the rest of the inhabitants. Divided into numerous warring clans, the Irish in the twelfth century were as far from political unity as ever. In 1166 Henry II's aid was solicited by an exiled chieftain named Dermot who received permission to seek aid from the barons. Accordingly, in 1169, a Norman force was sent into Ireland by Richard, earl of Pembroke, popularly known as Strongbow. The sequel may readily be guessed: Dermot's assistants took not only his territories, but many others, carving out fiefs for themselves exactly as they had in Wales. Finally, in 1171, Henry decided to intervene. Placing a justiciar at Dublin, he organized the Norman conquests on the east coast under direct royal authority and exacted homage from many Irish chiefs. The customs of Bristol were established in the principal towns. English dominion was thus extended over a portion of Ireland; many centuries were to pass before the whole island was subjected.

Through the almost imperial extent of his territories, Henry II was vastly more powerful than Louis VII of France; indeed, he far surpassed the Holy Roman Emperor in everything save dignity. Most of his time was naturally spent on the continent, where lay his principal interests. Not only French politics, but affairs of Italy, Germany, Spain, Constantinople, and Jerusalem received his attention. His daughters were married to the king of Castile, the king of Sicily, and Henry the Lion, the great duke of Saxony and Bavaria.<sup>11</sup> From a prince of such eminence matters of English administration could demand only an occasional glance. Nevertheless, among all the kings of England, none has left a greater impress on the history of the country than Henry II. Being a man of forceful personality who inspired extremes of hatred and devotion, Henry was vividly described by many writers. Like his Angevin father and grandfather, he had red hair; and with that went a freckled complexion, a thickset frame, and a fiery temper. Although passionate and ambitious, Henry remained preeminent for his practical sense, always preferring the realities of power to any sort of visionary project.

To maintain efficient authority throughout his widely separated dominions was almost a superhuman task for the twelfth century. That he did so is sufficient evidence of his greatness as an administrator. All contemporary writers agree on Henry's amaz-

<sup>11</sup> See below, pp. 398 f.

ing energy. His courtiers complained that they hardly had a chance to sleep; the king was forever getting up early in order to go somewhere. When he was not fighting or hunting, he was always fiercely engaged in some matter of business. Even during mass he had to be supplied with writing materials to keep him from fidgeting. These characteristics appear very prominently in connection with Henry's reforms in England. His entire reign was marked by a continuous process of experimentation, much of which proved of permanent value to the kingdom. For almost twenty years under Stephen the country had been plunged in chronic disorder—the period known to English historians as the Anarchy. Henry's first task was to restore the system of his grandfather, Henry I. All his enactments were fitted into the Norman tradition; none of them was published as an innovation. Yet, taking advantage of the public demand for strong monarchy, Henry was able by subtle changes to effect an enormous increase in the royal power. To make this point clear, it will be necessary to review the development of English institutions in the period following the Norman Conquest.

That event, as explained above, made England into a thoroughly feudal state. Under Henry I the situation remained fundamentally unchanged, but in the course of his reign certain constitutional elements of great significance may first be plainly distinguished. By this time, for instance, there had emerged a group of professional administrators and judges—the core of a permanent central government. Although the king might occasionally summon a general assembly of all his barons, both great and small, his ordinary administration was superintended by a select body of trusted advisers and high officials. Such were particularly the treasurer, the chancellor, the constable, and the chief justiciar, the man who headed the government while the king was abroad. These persons, together with other ministers, constituted the usual council of the king, or *curia regis*. And as yet there was only one such group, attending to all sorts of business. On one day it might discuss relations with the French king, on the next sit as a court of law, and on a third take up matters of finance.

The *curia regis* and the exchequer

In this last capacity, the *curia* under Henry I became known as the exchequer because the table about which the members gathered had a top like a chessboard. The exchequer was a form of

abacus,<sup>12</sup> designed to facilitate the work of addition and subtraction without recourse to the clumsy Roman numerals. By ancient custom the king's ordinary revenue in a shire was farmed to the sheriff—that is to say, was leased to him in return for a fixed annual payment. When, accordingly, the sheriff appeared before the court, the clerks arranged counters in columns to represent the pounds, shillings, and pence that he owed. Then they subtracted, item by item, whatever cash he had paid into the treasury and all expenditures which he had made on the king's order and for which he presented receipts or tallies.<sup>13</sup> Finally, after the account was completed, the sum remaining on the table indicated what he still owed. Meanwhile, other clerks had kept a written record of the transaction on sheets (or pipes) of parchment. These, when sewn together and rolled up, were known as a pipe roll. The oldest one extant is that of the year 1130, the sole survivor from the reign of Henry I. But from the time of Henry II, who reestablished the financial system of his grandfather, the annual accounts have been preserved complete.

Taxation  
and the  
owns

Just before the Conqueror's death he ordered a great survey by which the actual value of every manor in England was to be determined. In every hundred a number of men, both French and English, were placed on oath to answer questions put to them by royal ministers—a procedure introduced by the Normans and technically known as an inquest. The testimony thus given was written down by clerks and eventually condensed to form the huge compilation known as *Domesday Book*, which is our most precious source for English institutions in the eleventh century. Although the chief motive of the Domesday inquest was apparently the re-assessment of the ancient land tax, that project was never carried out. Henry I's pipe roll shows him collecting annual Danegelds on the basis of the old ratings. The only change was that the boroughs were now charged round sums more in accord with their ability to pay. To supplement the Danegeld, the king also exacted "aids" or "gifts" from the county courts and from individual military tenants. This practice was systematized and greatly extended by Henry II, so that he could soon afford to drop the old Danegeld altogether and rely on his newly perfected taxes, principally the scutage and the tallage. The former was a sort of aid taken from the barons in place of military service.

<sup>12</sup> See below, p. 418.

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 270.

The latter consisted primarily of arbitrary sums collected from the boroughs; but similar payments were also taken from manors of the royal demesne, from the communities of Jews under the king's protection, and from other non-nobles.

Although the barons were normally quite willing to substitute the payment of money for knight service, the ultimate advantage lay with the king. By taking the cash and hiring troops, he could procure a force entirely subject to his command and so become less dependent on the baronage. The scutage, marking a departure from the agrarian arrangements characteristic of feudalism, was significant of a new age in economic and political history. The same transition was even more clearly indicated by the tallage, for that tax showed an amazing development in the course of only a half-century. Rapid increase was made not merely in the number of boroughs which paid, but also in the amounts collected, so that the tallage soon became the largest item in the king's revenue. From the towns, too, came larger rents, together with handsome sums for the receipt of special privileges. Thanks to the pipe rolls, we may see precisely how Henry II profited by his patronage of the bourgeois class. His grandfather, as already noted, had granted self-government to London and established more elementary liberties in many other towns. Henry II issued municipal charters by the score. It is true that the Londoners, because of their hostility to his mother, now lost their right to elect magistrates, but Henry confirmed communes in Rouen and other continental cities, and on the English boroughs generally he conferred lesser rights with a lavish hand.

Financial interest may also be said to have dominated Henry II's judicial reforms. During earlier reigns members of the king's central court had occasionally been sent out into the counties on special missions—to hold trials, make investigations, or enforce decrees. Under Henry II these itinerant justices became a regular part of the government, and with the passing of the years their powers were constantly increased. Every so often they held full meetings of the county courts, where they were met by representatives of the hundreds and boroughs for the sake of taxation, police, and other administrative matters. One of the king's chief concerns was the restoration of law and order throughout the countryside, and, as the result of the anarchy under Stephen, he encountered great trouble in bringing suspected criminals to justice. Furthermore, he realized that current meth-

Judicial  
reforms



ods of trial, such as combat and compurgation, were far from satisfactory. If in some way he could devise a means of providing juster decisions, he might improve the efficiency of the government and also add enormously to his income. These needs he finally met by adaptations of the jury.

This famous English institution developed not from the procedure of the Anglo-Saxon courts, but from the Norman inquest, which was derived, somewhat obscurely, from Carolingian and late Roman practice. The essence of the inquest was that a question was asked a group of men selected because of their special knowledge and put on oath to tell the truth. The group was called a jury (from *jurati*, sworn men) and their return a verdict (*veredictum*, a true statement). As already noted, William I employed juries to gain the information for his Domesday survey; the same procedure was commonly followed in order to ascertain the liberties to which a person or a community was entitled, to assess a man's property for taxation, to investigate the conduct of an official, and for other administrative purposes. Henry II now adopted it as a means of starting criminal prosecutions. Within each shire, he commanded, twelve men from every hundred and four men from every vill should meet the itinerant justices and on oath present to them the names of all persons suspected of being robbers, murderers, and the like. This was the origin of the grand jury—i.e., the big jury, which brings accusations (presentments or indictments) preliminary to criminal trials. During the twelfth century the accused was still tried by the ordeal of hot water,<sup>14</sup> but the king showed his mistrust of that method by sending a man of very bad reputation into exile even if he passed the test.

Jury trial Under Henry II jury trial was restricted to civil suits. In certain specified cases of a disputed title to land, the king provided that the question at issue should be put to a jury of lawful men chosen from the neighborhood by the sheriff. For instance, if A was in possession of a property X, and B claimed it by right of inheritance from his father, the jury would be asked: Did B's

<sup>14</sup> The two customary ordeals under the old Anglo-Saxon law were those of hot water and hot iron. In the former the accused plunged his arm into hot water; in the latter he carried a heated bar of iron for a certain distance. In either case the wound was wrapped up and left for three days. If at the end of that time it was pronounced "clean," the man was innocent. It would seem, therefore, that guilt was determined by signs of infection, rather than of scalding or burning.

father possess X on the day when he was alive and dead? And according to their verdict the land would or would not be given to B. As yet, it will be noted, even this trial jury (the petit, or little, jury) was a group of expert witnesses who rendered a decision on their own knowledge, not from evidence produced in court. Many centuries were to pass before our familiar jury procedure was developed. As it was, however, Henry's trial jury was a great improvement over combat, and since the king had a monopoly of its use, his courts gained a great advantage over those of the barons. By a variety of legal technicalities, every freeholder, whether or not the king's tenant, was allowed to buy a writ bringing his case before the *curia regis*. So the feudal law of the seignorial courts, as well as the ancient custom of the Anglo-Saxon courts, was rapidly superseded by a growing body of royal law, known as the common law because it was common to the entire kingdom.

In his fiscal and judicial reforms Henry II thus extended and systematized practices which had already been employed by his predecessors. Likewise with regard to the church he in general followed the established custom of the Norman monarchy. The conquest of 1066, having been blessed by the pope, naturally brought to an end all local peculiarities of ecclesiastical government disapproved by Rome. Episcopal sees were removed from country villages to more important urban centers; the primacy of the archbishop of Canterbury was definitely recognized; monasteries were thoroughly reformed in harmony with the Cluniac ideals; a series of church courts entirely separate from those of the state was established. In all these matters the Norman king acted in hearty cooperation with Archbishop Lanfranc and the papal legates. When, however, Gregory VII suggested that William perform homage to him for England, he was met with blunt refusal. The Conqueror also continued to appoint and invest prelates at his own pleasure. Gregory never brought this matter to an issue in England, but it was revived by Anselm after he had quarreled with William II, and it remained to trouble the administration of Henry I. Finally, in 1106, both parties agreed to a compromise. Although bishops and abbots were to be elected respectively by the cathedral and monastic chapters, the election had to be held in the king's presence, and the chosen prelate had to perform homage before receiving his lands from the king.

Relations  
of church  
and state

Formal installation with the ring and staff, the symbols of spiritual office, was to be subsequently carried out by a clergyman.

Thenceforth the matter of investiture was a closed issue, but various other questions were to force themselves on Henry II's attention. During the troubled reign of Stephen, the church, like the baronage, had naturally tended to encroach on the royal authority. The age was one of new enthusiasm for the study of canon law.<sup>15</sup> Church courts were generally claiming jurisdiction not only over purely ecclesiastical questions, but over all cases which involved persons in holy orders. Henry II was quite willing that the church should continue to decide such questions as perjury, the enforcement of wills, and the validity of marriages. But he felt that courts of canon law, since they were forbidden to take life or to shed blood, were hardly in position to deal with thieves and murderers. He insisted that, according to the custom of Henry I's reign, clergymen convicted of serious crime in the church court should be stripped of their holy orders and turned over to the state for punishment. This position was one supported by many authorities on canon law; yet it came to be bitterly opposed by the new archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket.

The latter was the son of a London merchant who earlier had zealously served the king as royal chancellor. Then, on being appointed to the see of Canterbury in 1162, he turned completely about and became a fanatical champion of ecclesiastical independence. In 1164 Henry secured the agreement of a great council to the famous Constitutions of Clarendon, which prescribed the king's plan for the treatment of criminous clerks, prohibited appeals to Rome without royal license, regulated procedure in disputes between laity and clergy, and in general defined the relations of church and state. Becket, after signing the Constitutions, repudiated his promise and proceeded by word and deed to infuriate the hot-blooded king, who replied with every form of legal persecution. Six years of violent controversy ended in a hollow reconciliation. Finally, after a fresh quarrel, certain courtiers took the king's angry words too literally and slew the archbishop before his altar at Canterbury. The result was the canonization of Becket as a martyr and the partial failure of the king's reform program. For many centuries thereafter a criminal could get off virtually scot-free on the first offense by pleading "benefit

St.  
Thomas  
Becket

<sup>15</sup> See below, p. 431.

of clergy" and proving that he was a clerk by reading one passage in the Bible. In major respects, however, the king's authority over the English clergy remained undiminished and was not seriously challenged for another generation.

All in all, Henry II's reign established constitutional and legal precedents which have affected England from that day to the present. And it is worth noting that these momentous results were accomplished not by formal legislation, but by administrative experimentation—through sets of instructions to his itinerant justices somewhat like the capitularies of Charlemagne. These assizes, as they are called, constitute our most important source for the king's reforms, but they are supplemented by two private works very characteristic of the new age. One is the *Dialogue on the Exchequer*, written by the treasurer, Richard Fitz-Nigel—a highly technical essay on the working of Henry's financial system. The other is the *Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Kingdom of England*, by Henry's justiciar, Ranulf de Glanvill—the first of many famous writings on the English common law. These books, together with the multiplication of pipe rolls and other administrative records, show how the king's service was becoming a profession worthy of the best talent that the kingdom could offer.

Books on  
law and  
adminis-  
tration

### 3. PHILIP AUGUSTUS

After peacefully observing Henry II's spectacular rise to power, Louis VII continued to reign uneventfully for another quarter of a century. By his first wife, Eleanor, he had no sons; by his second, a daughter of the count of Blois, he was finally blessed with an heir. And this son, Philip, to whom later historians were to give the surname Augustus, was soon called to undertake the government of the kingdom. Knighted and crowned at the age of fourteen, he actually began his reign in 1179. In the next year his father died, and Philip celebrated his independence by marrying the niece of the Flemish count. By this alliance the youthful king accomplished two ends: he counteracted the threatening influence of his mother's family, the great house of Blois, and he secured as dowry the promise of Artois, the region about the wealthy towns of Arras and Saint-Omer. The count of Flanders, however, was disappointed in his hope of controlling France; for Philip next arranged a treaty with Henry II, who, being old and in poor health, was quite willing to spend his last days in peace.

Accession  
and  
character

Philip as a mere boy thus displayed the wisdom that was to characterize him throughout life and was to make his reign one of the most significant in history. As to his physique, we hear of no very striking traits, except that in later years he became bald and that he was said to have one bad eye. He was not at all ascetic, being fond of good cheer; and although he was somewhat less licentious than his Angevin rivals, his private life was by no means spotless. Being forced at an early age to begin the career of a soldier and statesman, he never progressed far in education—never, in fact, learned to read Latin. He was pious enough in outward conduct, but piety can hardly be said ever to have dictated any of his important actions. Fundamentally he was what the French call a *politique*, a man whose career was dominated by political considerations. Not in the least chivalrous, Philip fought when he had to as a matter of business, and fought well. In traditional goodness he was greatly inferior to Louis VII, and yet there can be no question as to which was the better king. Philip's crafty self-control and hard intelligence, while they won for him few warm friends, enabled him to redeem his father's mistakes and triumphantly resume the policy of his grandfather.

The acquisition of Artois and Vermandois

Philip's alliance with Henry in 1180 brought him six years of immunity from Angevin aggression—a period which he used to full advantage. By a shrewd combination of fighting and diplomacy, he not only broke up a feudal coalition headed by his uncles, but emerged from the contest with a noteworthy accession of territory. The count of Flanders was forced to recognize his title, first, to Artois and, secondly, to Vermandois, the succession to which had been disputed. As a consequence, the king eventually added to his domain a large section of Picardy, including the famous Somme towns of Amiens, Péronne, and Saint-Quentin. No sooner had Philip brought the northern war to a successful close, than he proceeded to attack the Angevin power—not so much through direct military operations as through intrigue with Henry II's jealous sons. Of the latter, four had survived to come into contact with Philip: Henry, already crowned as his father's successor; Richard, invested with his mother's duchy of Aquitaine; Geoffrey, by marriage count of Brittany; and John, for obvious reasons nicknamed Lackland (*Sans-Terre*). They were a cruel and ungrateful lot; and as the result of their treacheries, encouraged by the foolish indulgence of the old king,

the scheming Philip found a means of humbling his formidable adversary.

Henry was the first to rebel against his father and engage in war with Richard over Aquitaine; but as the young king died in 1183, Richard became heir to the throne, and this event provoked a contest between him and Geoffrey. Next, Geoffrey died, leaving an infant son, the ill-fated Arthur of Brittany. The fall of Jerusalem and the agitation for a new crusade<sup>16</sup> caused a momentary diversion. Then, in 1189, the revolt of both Richard and John brought needless shame and grief to the dying Henry II. In all these disturbances Philip from the outset was an interested participant, always acting with great show of legality and always by his support fomenting further discord among the Angevins. Earlier he had supported Geoffrey against Richard; subsequently he and Richard had become boon companions. Now that Henry was dead, what would be Philip's attitude? During the previous year both princes had taken the cross: Richard acting in whole-hearted enthusiasm, Philip only through pressure of public opinion. Until the crusade was accomplished, other matters would have to wait. So Philip temporarily overlooked the insolence of his rival and in 1191 sailed with him to the Holy Land.

Intrigues  
with  
Henry's  
sons

The new king of England was a fine figure of manhood and, as a soldier, richly deserved the name given him, Richard Lion-Heart (*Cœur de Lion*). He possessed not only the bravery and gallantry of the typical knight, but also the generalship of the natural-born commander. And in military engineering he proved himself the ablest prince in the west. Richard was likewise, according to the standard of the age, a cultured man, speaking Latin fluently and composing verses after the fashion of a troubadour. Yet he lacked the conscientious statesmanship of his father. Passionately devoted to warfare, he regarded government merely as a source of income. What little interest he displayed in matters of administration was restricted to his original principality of Aquitaine, where alone he was thoroughly at home. To England he was almost as foreign as his mother Eleanor. Crossing the Channel in 1189 for the sake of his coronation, he left after the passage of a few months and during the rest of his life paid the kingdom only one other fleeting visit. It was by virtue of the

Richard  
Lion-  
Heart  
(1189-99)

<sup>16</sup> See below, p. 523.

efficient machine created by Henry II and through the skill of Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury and justiciar, that the royal government continued to run smoothly whether the king was present or absent.

On the crusade Richard was of course in his true element. There, by the storming of Acre, he gained high renown, which his later romantic adventures served to enhance. Richard's glory was gall to Philip, who could not shine as a crusader and who felt an imperious urge to resume political manipulations in France. So, even before the year was out, he excused himself on the ground of sickness and, leaving part of his army with Richard, took ship for Italy. On arriving at home, he proceeded to take possession of various territories claimed under earlier treaties and now left vacant by the death of the Flemish count. Then he turned to the congenial task of encouraging John to plot against his absent brother. To the delight of the conspirators, Richard, while returning through Germany in 1192, was taken prisoner by the duke of Austria, turned over to the emperor Henry VI, and by him held for ransom.<sup>17</sup> Philip and John offered large sums to have the imprisonment continued indefinitely, but Richard met the emperor's terms and, after the ransom had been raised by heavy taxation, he was released in 1194.

The  
accession  
of John  
(1199)

This event brought to a sudden end John's dream of an independent principality. Richard, after spending a few weeks in England to put down what little resistance still showed itself, returned to the continent for the sake of organizing a great war of revenge against the deceitful French king. Nor were his hopes disappointed. During five years of conflict he succeeded on every front. Philip was driven headlong out of Touraine and Richard's authority was reestablished throughout the Angevin dominions. Meanwhile, to assure the defense of Normandy, he had blocked the Seine Valley with the magnificent Château Gail-lard, the strongest castle of the age. But in 1199 Richard died of wounds received in a minor engagement, and his passing proved a boon to the Capetian cause. The magnates now had to choose between Prince John and Arthur, the son of his elder brother. John being a mature man, gained immediate recognition in England, Normandy, and Aquitaine. Philip, who had shifted his affections to Arthur, eventually failed to secure even

<sup>17</sup> See below, p. 402.

Anjou for his protégé. So, in 1200, he signed peace, recognizing John as successor to Richard in all the great Angevin fiefs and guaranteeing to Arthur only Brittany, to be held directly of the French crown.

At the time, of course, John was comparatively unknown, or he would never have received the acclaim of clergy and baronage. To the bitter disillusionment of his supporters, he soon showed himself a thoroughly mean person, without a spark of nobility or a single generous impulse. The age was one which readily forgave a certain amount of cruelty, sensuality, or avarice on the part of a prince. Neither the Angevins nor the Capetians had been notably free from such vices, but even the worst of them had possessed redeeming traits of sincerity, courage, determination, or loyalty. Although Philip Augustus might not be loved, he could be admired and respected. John seemed destined to evoke only a universal hatred. It was not that he lacked ability. The fact that he had undoubted talents, which were either wasted or turned to ignoble ends, only made him appear the more despicable. The verdict was unanimous: he was a bad man and a bad king, without even the poor excuse of stupidity.

When Philip signed peace with John in 1200, he had no intention of allowing it to stand. Being for the moment embarrassed by a controversy with the pope,<sup>18</sup> he preferred to play a waiting game, hoping for what is popularly known as a break. Such a favorable opportunity soon arose. By carrying off a lady betrothed to one of his own vassals and through other high-handed actions, John inspired appeals to the court of his lord, the king of France. Under the earlier Angevins an incident of this sort would have been little more than a political gesture. When had a Capetian been able to hale into court one of his powerful barons for failure to give a vassal justice? But times had changed and Philip had made careful preparations for decisive action. Having already determined on war, he needed only a useful pretext. So, in 1202, when John, after being summoned three times, quite naturally refused to appear before Philip's court, the latter formally adjudged him guilty of felony and declared his fiefs forfeit.<sup>19</sup>

Philip's  
conquests  
from John

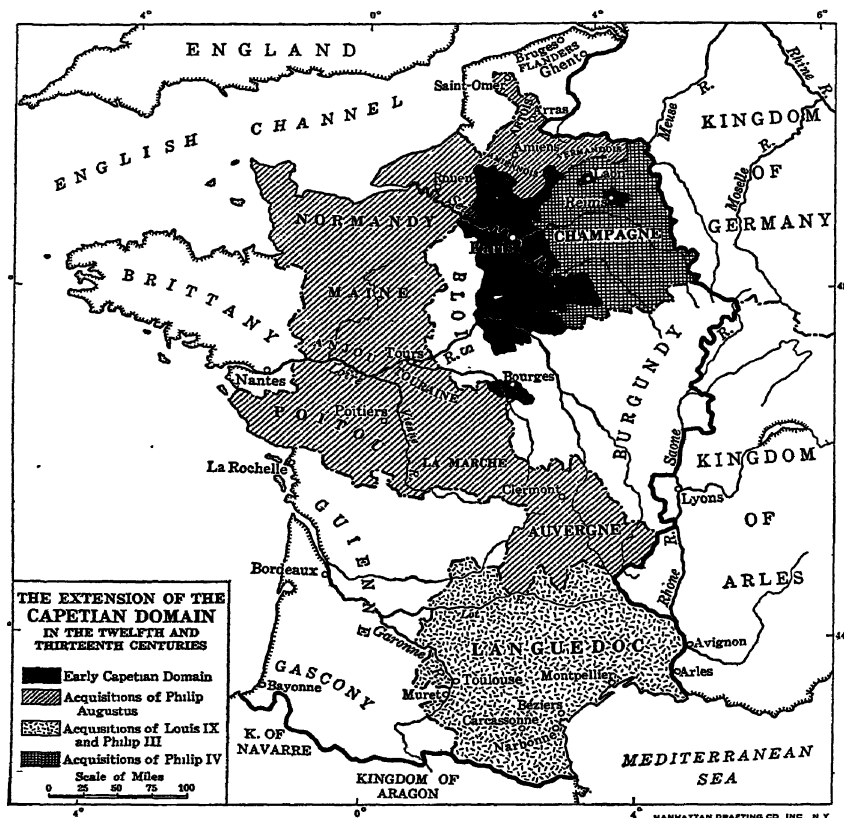
The amazing part of the story was that which followed. A

<sup>18</sup> See below, p. 409.

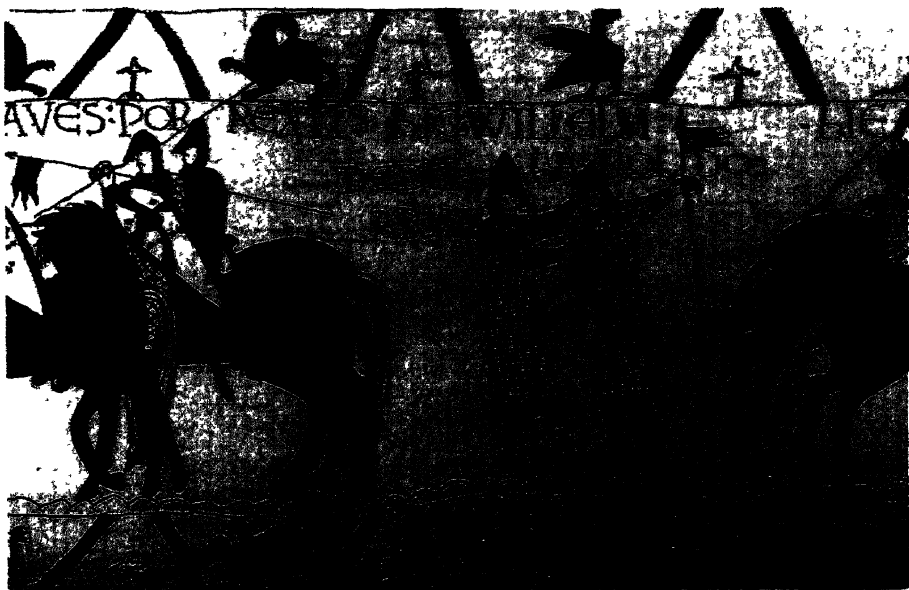
<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 256.



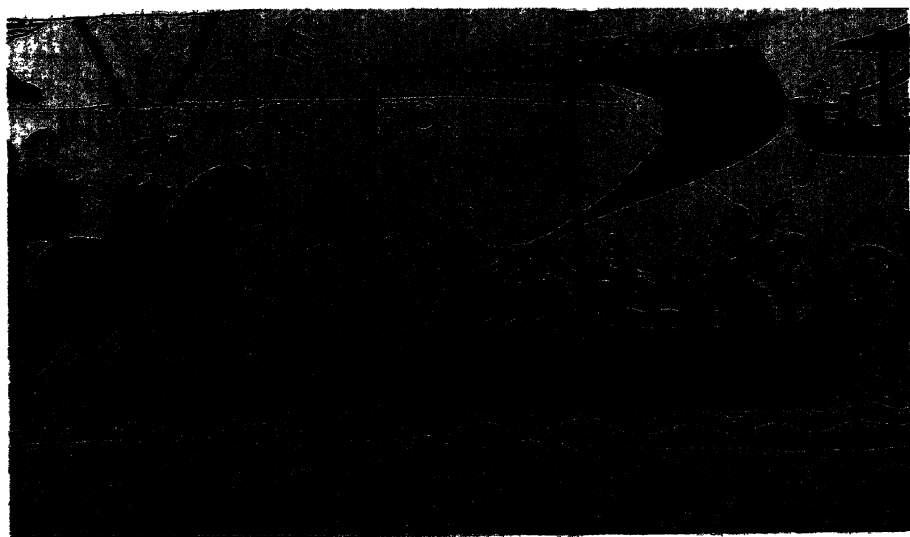
decree of forfeiture was one matter; to enforce it quite another. Even when Philip invaded Normandy and invested Arthur with the remaining Angevin fiefs, John's position was the same as that which had so effectively been held by Richard. John, in fact, began the war with a notable victory. Leaving Philip's advance to be checked by the great Norman castles, he concentrated his



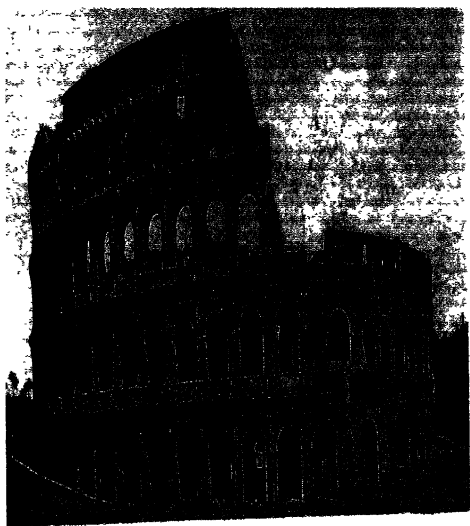
forces against the Breton army and captured his young nephew, Arthur. For a year or so the unfortunate count was kept prisoner in Normandy; then he disappeared—murdered, as the world has since believed, at the instigation of his uncle. Although the details of the crime were never revealed, no one doubted that it had occurred; and the immediate consequence was a general revulsion of feeling. Maine, Anjou, and Touraine declared for Philip



Duke William Knights Earl Harold



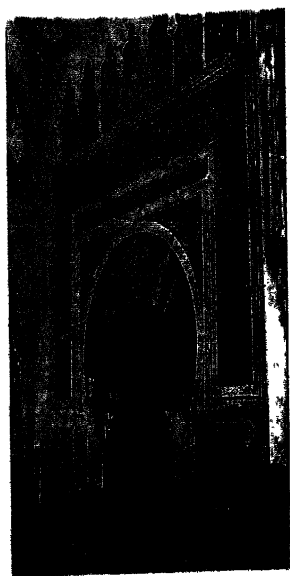
Duke William Embarks for England  
 Scenes from the Bayeux Tapestry  
 (See pp. 208-60).



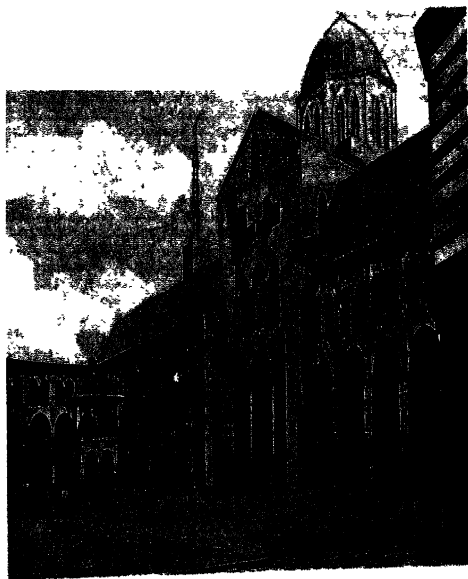
The Colosseum (Rome) (See p. 124)



St. Sophia (Constantinople) (See p. 125)



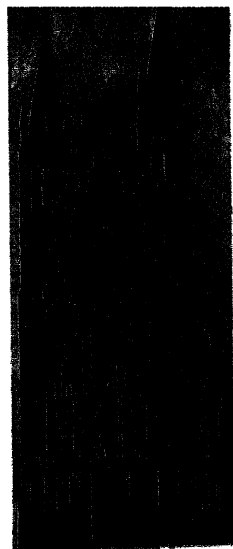
Mosque of Cordova, Doorway (See p.



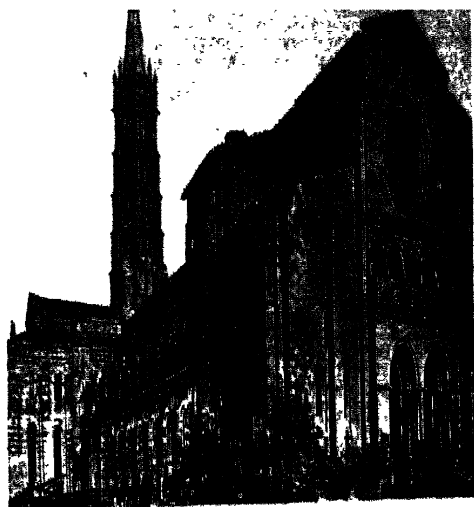
Great Mosque (Damascus) (See p. 205)



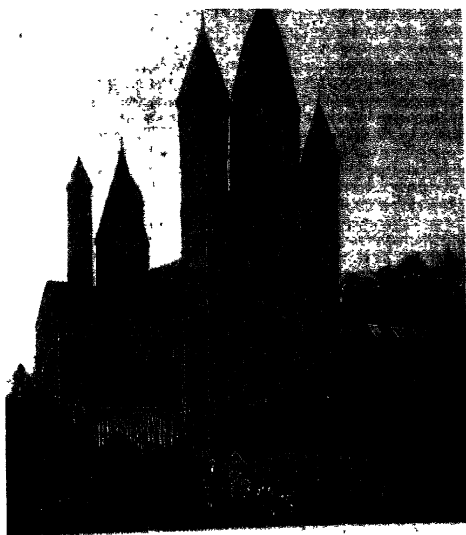
Cathedral of Pisa (See p. 473)



Angoulême Cathedral (See p. 475)



Saint-Sernin (Toulouse) (See p. 475)



Abbey of Laach (See p. 477)



Sant' Apollinare in Classe (Ravenna), Interior (See p. 127)



Sant' Ambrogio (Milan), Interior (See p. 474)



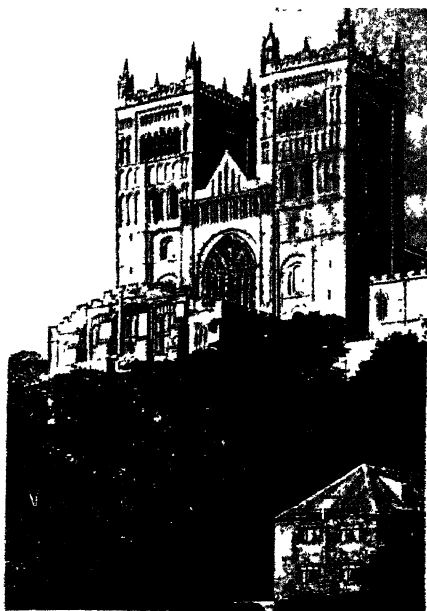
Abbey of Vézelay, Interior (See p. 475)



Saint-Trophime (Arles), Main Portal (See pp. 474, 490)



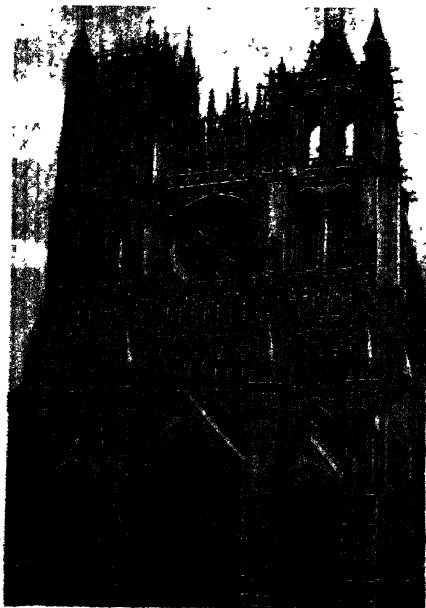
Abbaye-Aux-Hommes (Caen)  
(See p. 476)



Durham Cathedral  
(See p. 476)



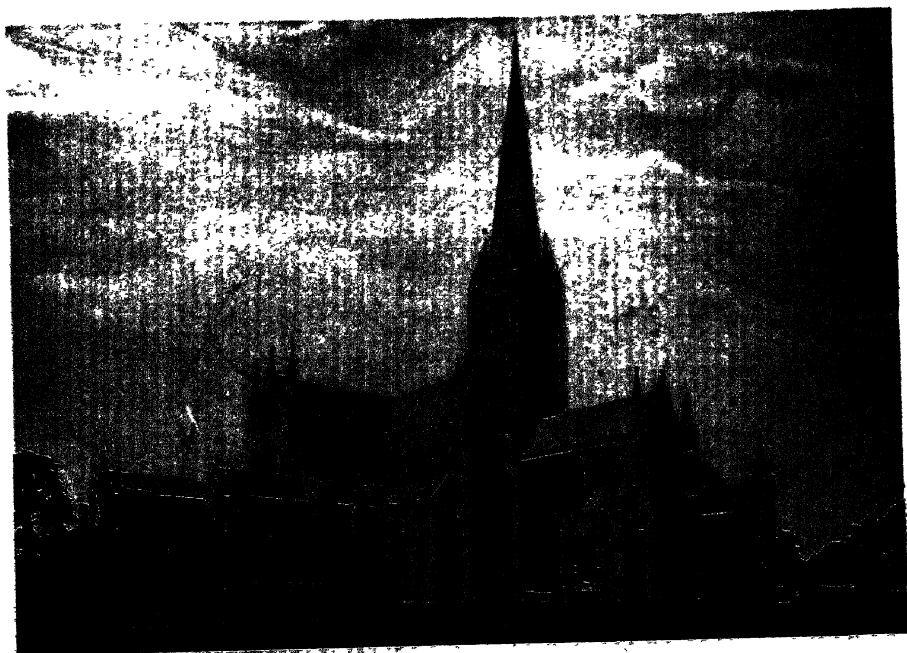
Notre-Dame (Paris)  
(See p. 482)



Amiens Cathedral  
(See p. 484)

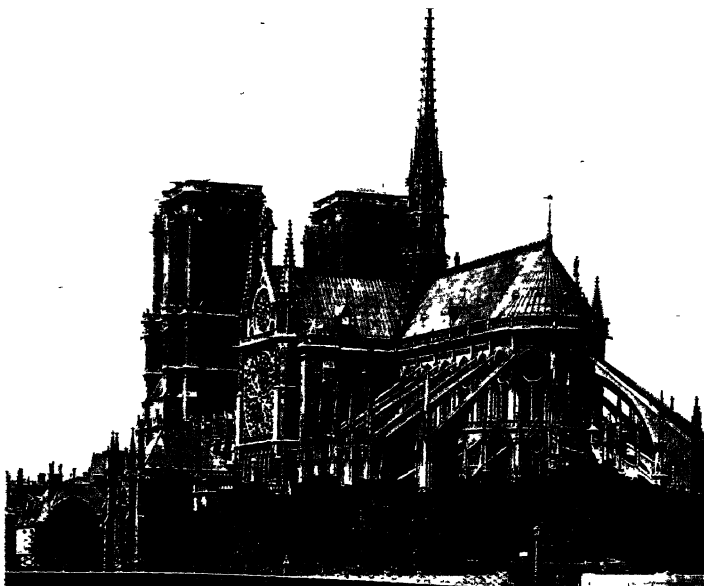


Lincoln Cathedral (See p. 486)

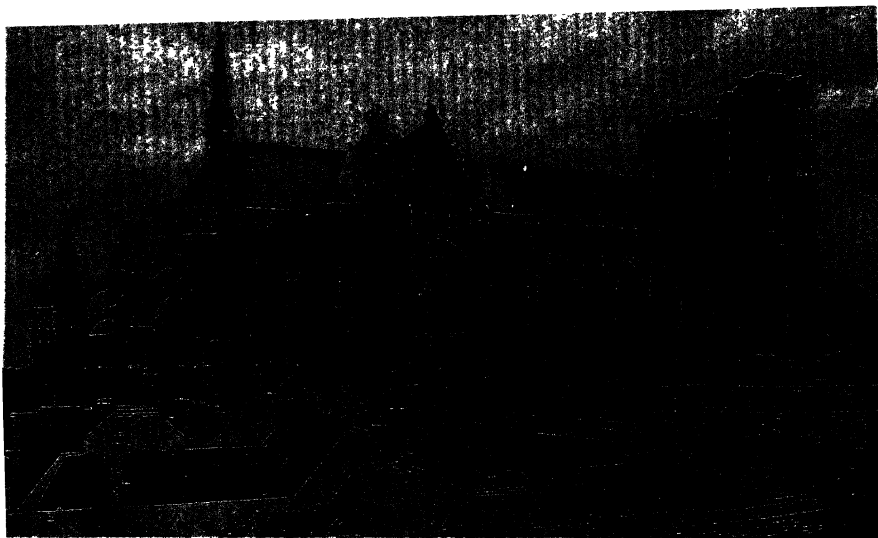


Salisbury Cathedral (See p. 487)





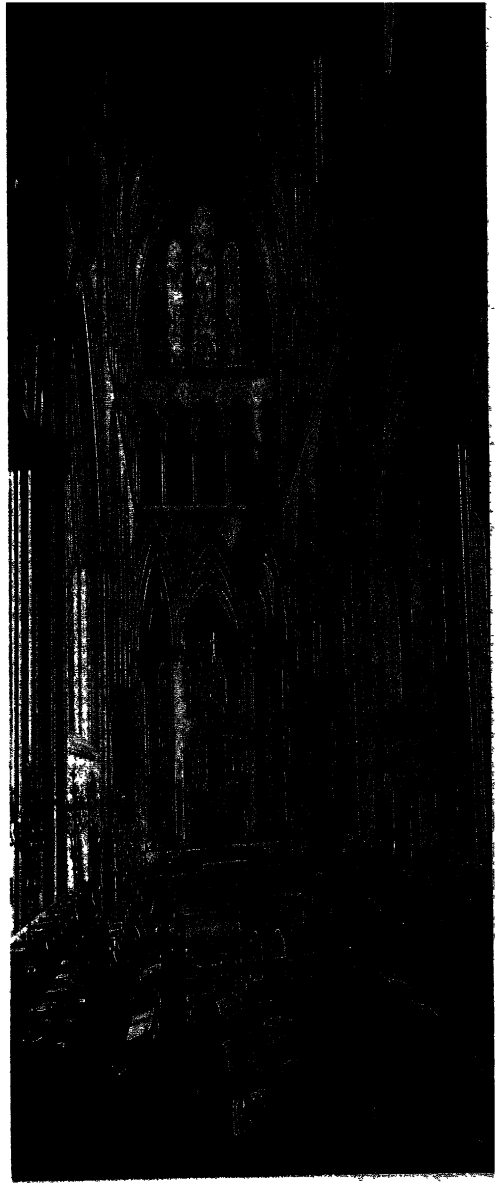
Notre-Dame (Paris), Chevet (*See p. 483*)



Reims Cathedral, North Side (*See p. 483*)



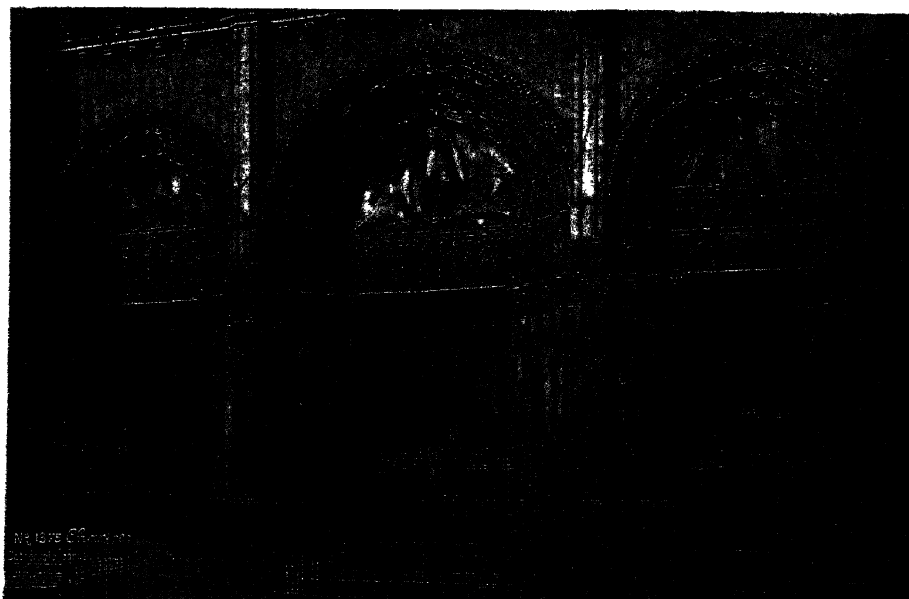
Amiens Cathedral, Interior  
*Photo Clarence Ward*  
*(See pp. 484, 487)*



Salisbury Cathedral, Interior  
*(See pp. 484, 487)*



Abbey of Vézelay, Portal (*See p. 475*)



Chartres Cathedral, Main Portal (*See pp. 482, 489*)



Virgin of the Annunciation (Reims) (See p.



Mont-Saint-Michel, Cloister (See p. 485)



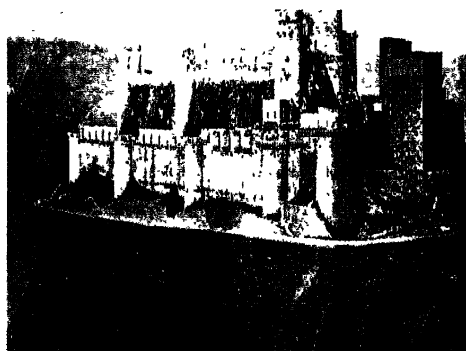
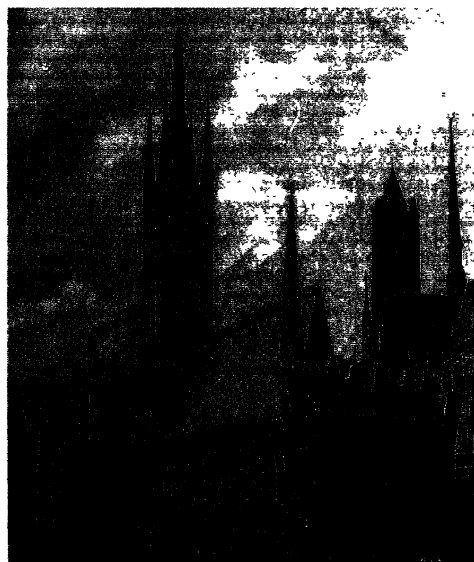
Vintage Capital (Reims) (See p. 498)

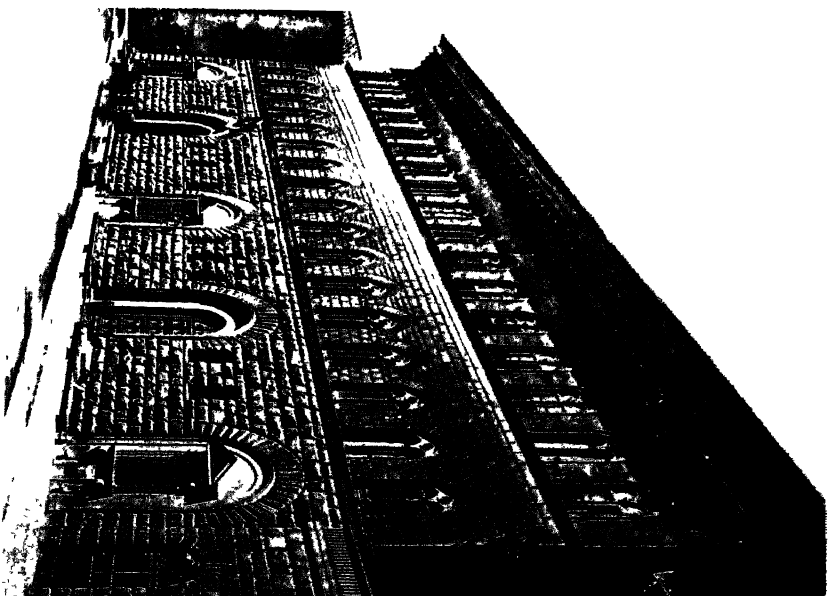


Mont-Saint-Michel (*See p. 485*)



Kenilworth Castle (England) (*See p. 498*)

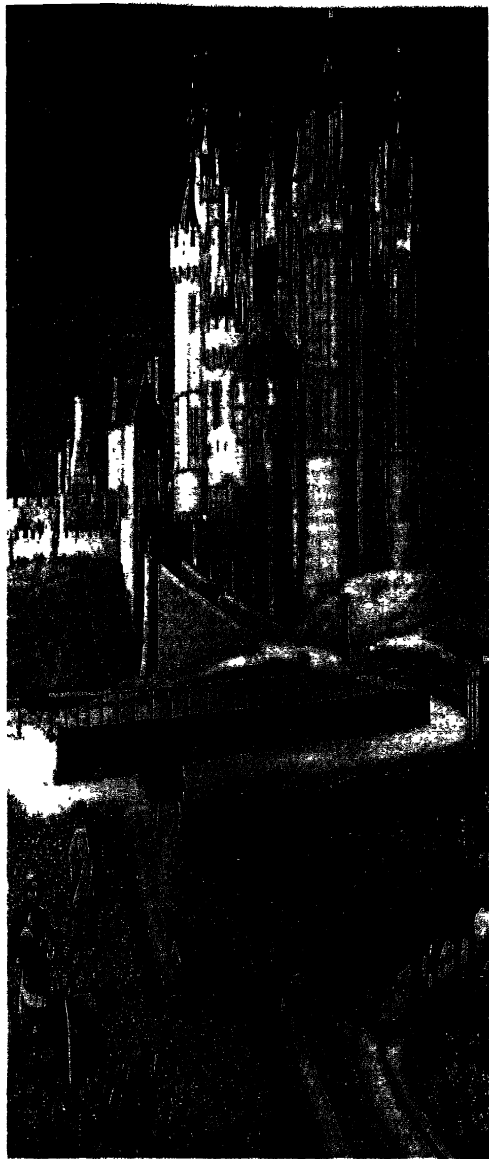




Medici Palace      ence



Cloth Ha      ge      8.      716.



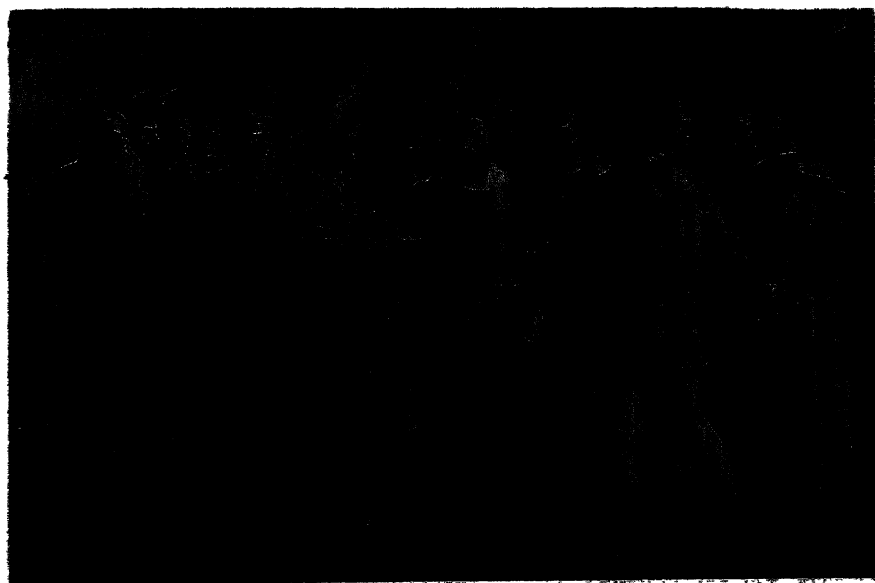
Illumination from the Duke of Berry's Book of Hours  
(See p. 717)



Van Eyck, "The Man With the Pink" (See p. 717)

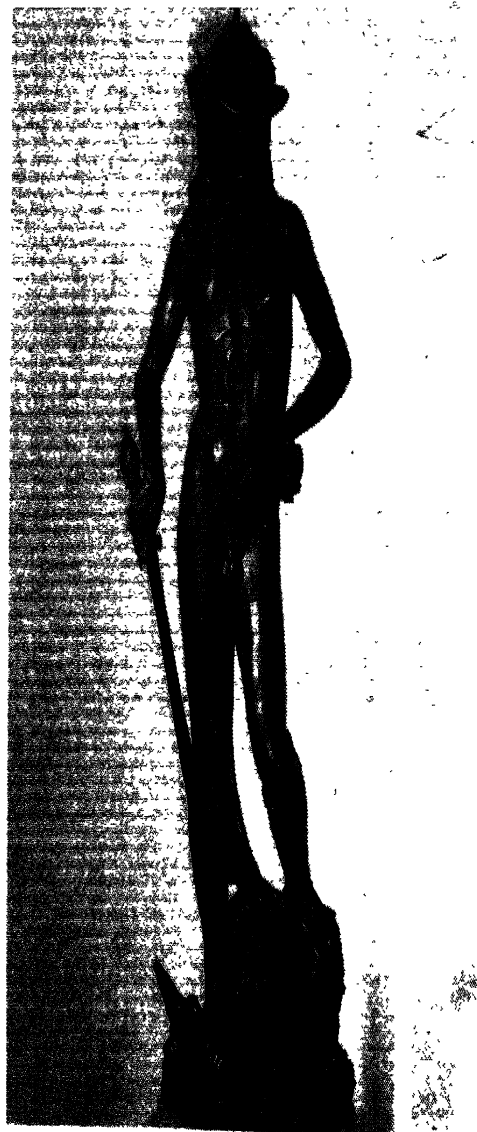


Giotto, "The Descent From the Cross" (See p. 719)



Masaccio, "The Tribute Money" (See p. 719)





Donatello, "David" (*See p. 719*)



Ghiberti, Bronze Doors of the Baptistery, (Florence)

(*See p. 719*)

and so cut off all communications between Aquitaine and Normandy. At this critical moment John chose to lose interest in the war, allowing his enemies to overrun his patrimony almost as they would. After a siege of eight months, Philip actually took the Château Gaillard in February, 1204; in the following summer Rouen surrendered, and the proud duchy of Normandy was added to the royal domain. The last of John's castles on the Loire fell in 1205. Within another year Philip had also taken most of Poitou and was dictating a new political settlement for Brittany. Only then did John bestir himself sufficiently to hold what remained of Aquitaine; it was too late to save the ancestral fiefs to the north.

Like the Norman Conquest of England, this series of events marked a significant turning-point in the history of the western monarchies. As far as France was concerned, Philip Augustus revolutionized the political situation. Henceforth the king, instead of being one of the less powerful princes of the kingdom, suddenly emerged as its master, many times stronger than any one of his remaining barons. Consequently, royal rights that for centuries had been only theoretical now tended to become actualities. As Picardy, Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou were joined to the Île de France, Philip devised for the combined territories a new administrative system under royal officials called *baillis*. And as the king's service became a profession for trained lawyers and financial experts, what we recognize as the mediæval French constitution began to take form.

Consequences  
for France

For England John's loss of Normandy, though long considered a shame and a disgrace, eventually proved an enormous benefit. The island kingdom, instead of being merely the outlying possession of a continental prince, became a state regarded for its own sake. Norman barons, who hitherto had held lands on both sides of the Channel, now had to choose which they should be, English vassals or French vassals. The Angevin house still, of course, held southern Aquitaine, but that land had always been foreign to its northern fiefs. The first step in the direction of an English nationality had perforce been taken. John lived on to engage in two other famous contests: one, with Innocent III, made England into a papal fief for over a hundred years; the other, with the baronage, resulted in the granting of Magna Carta. These matters, together with the latter part of Philip's reign, can be more conveniently treated in connection with the events of the thirteenth century.

Consequences  
for  
England

## CHAPTER XVII

### ITALY AND GERMANY: THE TRIUMPH OF THE PAPACY

#### I. THE KINGDOM OF SICILY

The central theme of the following six chapters

WHILE the kings of France and England were preoccupied with feudal wars and problems of administration, the struggle between the popes and the emperors was revived and accentuated. Throughout the entire twelfth century the issue remained in doubt; then the papacy emerged triumphant under Innocent III. During his pontificate every important state of Christendom was in one way or another brought within the sphere of papal action. The Capetian-Angevin war was drawn into the greater conflict for supremacy in central Europe. Spanish, Slavic, and Scandinavian kingdoms, the crusaders' principalities in Syria, even the government at Constantinople, were made to take orders from the head of the church at Rome. In the meantime a score of remarkable developments in religion, law, education, art, and literature were brought under ecclesiastical control, to be checked or encouraged according to the papal interest.

The opening decades of the thirteenth century have with justice been called the age of Innocent III, for his influence was felt in every part of Europe and in every public activity. To give any appreciation of so complex a subject in a few pages is quite impossible. Each phase of it must be treated separately. The present chapter will deal only with political affairs that immediately concerned Italy and Germany. Subsequent chapters will take up the continuation of the crusading movement, the agitation for religious reform, and noteworthy developments in the intellectual and æsthetic fields. Eventually these various narratives, though including widely scattered events, will be found to converge on one central theme, mediæval civilization in the time of Innocent III.

Among the states destined to be intimately associated with the fortunes of the papacy was that of the Normans in southern Italy.<sup>1</sup> After the death of Robert Guiscard, his duchy on the

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 329 f.

mainland fell into anarchy under an incompetent son. The island of Sicily, on the other hand, remained a strong and well-organized state even during the minority of Roger II, the son and successor of the first count. Having attained his majority in 1112, Roger II almost at once revealed the trend of his policy by launching a series of raids against the Moors of Tunis. This project, however, was temporarily dropped on the news that his cousin had died, leaving without direct heirs a theoretical duchy of Calabria and Apulia. Roger, to anticipate any interference from Bohemund's son in far-away Antioch, acted with speed and determination. Despite the papal opposition, the count of Sicily forced his recognition throughout Guiscard's dominions, guaranteeing special privileges to all the cities and barons who at once agreed to submit, and crushing in battle those who resisted. By 1128 the pope had no choice but to give him formal investiture of the duchy, and in 1130 Roger took advantage of a disputed succession at Rome to secure the title, King of Sicily.

Roger II,  
king of  
Sicily  
(1130-54)

What was more remarkable, Roger proceeded to weld his disparate territories into a real kingdom, centralized and efficient, and to maintain it in the face of many foes. Arrayed against him were, in the first place, a host of restless barons and other discontented subjects who wanted no strong monarchy. Secondly, he encountered the bitter hostility of the German and Byzantine empires, neither of which had ever forgiven the Normans for their conquest of the southern peninsula. Lastly, the pope, as feudal lord, naturally feared that his too powerful vassal might be more of a danger than a protection. To prevent all combinations of his enemies, Roger exhibited a diplomatic skill as coldly realistic as that of any more modern despot. Through the offer of commercial advantages, he gained the support of the great Italian cities and assured himself the mastery of the sea. To force concessions from the pope—recognition of his royal dignity and the control of ecclesiastical appointments—he made use of the German peril. By playing off one emperor against the other, he kept either from decisive action. He took advantage of the crusade to revive Guiscard's Byzantine project, seizing Corfu and sacking Thebes. Finally he was able to resume the offensive in Africa. Before his death in 1154 he had conquered and occupied the coast from Tripoli to Tunis.

Diplomacy  
and  
adminis-  
tration

Meanwhile Roger had broken every rebellion directed against his authority, and built up a royal government that had no equal

in Europe outside Constantinople. Many details of his administration he learned from the Greeks of Calabria, but much he took over from the Arabs of Sicily. With these elements he combined others derived from Norman-French custom—notably the feudal tenure of land, together with the connected military services, judicial obligations, aids, and incidents. Superficially the Sicilian monarchy was a startling mosaic, for it employed institutions drawn from all parts of the Mediterranean world. Serving the king were Norman constables, justiciars, and viscounts; Greek *catapans* (captains) and *strategoi* (generals); Arabic *cadis* and *emirs* (Latinized as admirals). Its official records were kept in three languages: Latin, Greek, and Arabic. Besides these, its rulers had to know the French and Italian vernaculars. Throughout Roger's territories Greek and Roman Christians lived side by side, along with Jews and Moslems—each group under its own law and enjoying complete toleration. The army and the navy, like the civil service, were polyglot forces, to enter which the only requirement was loyalty to the prince. This kingdom of Sicily was truly a remarkable achievement for the early twelfth century.

Culture  
at the  
Sicilian  
court

In some respects Roger II's policy may be seen to have resembled that of the Norman kings in England—as in the prohibition of private war, the enforcement of appeals from baronial courts, and the control of ecclesiastical offices. In connection with the towns Roger II, like Henry I, was generous with the fundamental bourgeois liberties, but very chary in grants of political autonomy. As soon as he had consolidated his position in Italy, he rescinded many grants made during his earlier years and brought all his communes under tight governmental supervision. In England a Norman dynasty built up a powerful administrative machine by combining native and foreign institutions. In the southern kingdom similar work advanced even more rapidly because the king could draw from the more mature civilizations of the east. From them too he gained an appreciation of art and learning that set him apart from all his feudal contemporaries. While Greek was virtually unknown in the schools of France and Germany, one of Roger's principal ministers, Henry Aristippus, was translating Plato into Latin, and the Arab Idrisi was composing the best geographical study of the age.<sup>2</sup> At the Sicilian court minstrels

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 654.

and troubadours, who sang in French and Provençal, were rivaled by Moorish poets who followed literary traditions old in the days of Mohammed. And the mixture of cultures was reflected in Roger's palaces and churches, which strangely but effectively assimilated the Romanesque, Byzantine, and Saracenic styles of architecture.

For a century after the death of Roger II his state remained one of the great Mediterranean powers. The reigns of William I, his son, and William II, his grandson, were mere continuations of his own. The strength of the monarchy was ruthlessly maintained in spite of all rebellions; with the help of the Genoese, a series of raids were carried into Byzantine territory, and the pope was vigorously supported against the German king. In Africa, meanwhile, the Mohammedan power had once more been strengthened by the rise of a new sect, the Almohads.<sup>3</sup> Emerging from the southern desert like their predecessors, the Almoravids, they seized the Moroccan coast and crossed into Spain, where the Christian advance was again halted.<sup>4</sup> Only Portugal on the west and the combined states of Catalonia and Aragon on the east were able to make any progress during the twelfth century. The Normans, driven from Tunis, abandoned the African project of Roger II. Henceforth their energies were to be absorbed by affairs of Italy and the Holy Roman Empire.

Spain and  
Africa

## 2. GUELF VS. HOHENSTAUFEN

Henry IV's reign of just a half-century finally ended in 1106, during a cruel war with his only surviving son. The latter, as Henry V, then deserted his baronial allies and adopted his father's policy. Crossing the Alps, he captured Pope Paschal II, the unheroic successor of Urban II, and by force secured the imperial crown for himself and for his English wife, Matilda.<sup>5</sup> Then followed ten years of weary conflict with other popes in Italy and with rebel princes in Germany. Finally, in 1122, the investiture controversy was settled by the Concordat of Worms—a compromise on virtually the same terms as had been agreed to by Henry I of England and Archbishop Anselm.<sup>6</sup> The emperor retained his power of investing prelates with their lands and immunities,

Henry V  
(1106-25)

<sup>3</sup> Properly *al-Muwahhid*, unitarians.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 328; below, pp. 542 f.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 374.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 383.

but yielded to the church investiture with the ring and the staff. While elections were to be "free," they had to be held in the emperor's presence, and his right to nominate candidates was tacitly permitted. Three years later Henry V died without direct heirs, and the question of the royal succession once more became acute.

The house  
of Hohen-  
staufen

A similar situation had arisen in 1024 on the death of Henry II, the last of the Saxon house by male descent. At that time the German magnates still held to the hereditary principle by at once recognizing Conrad of Franconia, descended from a daughter of Otto I.<sup>7</sup> Now, in 1125, if the same rule were applied, the crown would pass to Frederick, duke of Suabia (see Table VI). He was of the family, henceforth to be illustrious, which took its name from the castle of Hohenstaufen on the upper Danube. His father had been given the duchy of Suabia, earlier held by the anti-king Rudolf,<sup>8</sup> and with it the hand of Henry IV's daughter Agnes. Since she lived to take as her second husband the marquis of Austria, and by her two mates had no less than twenty-three children, the royal line was in no danger of extinction. In 1125, however, the prestige of the Franconian house was not sufficient to overcome the desire of the electors to assert their independence of action. Deliberately passing over Frederick of Hohenstaufen, eldest son of Agnes, they gave the crown to an upstart prince without a drop of royal blood in his veins. This was Lothair of Supplinburg, a petty noble who had secured the duchy of Saxony on the death of the last Billung in 1106.

The house  
of Guelf

The determining factor in Lothair's election was his relationship to the powerful house of Guelf or Welf. A Suabian noble by that name had received from Henry IV the duchy of Bavaria, forfeited by Otto of Nordheim.<sup>9</sup> He had been succeeded by Henry the Black, whose son was now married to Lothair's daughter—an alliance that was eventually to bring the two duchies of Saxony and Bavaria under the one prince, Henry the Proud (see Table V). Thus began the bitter feud that was to convulse German and imperial politics for many generations. The Guelfs were the natural rivals of their neighbors, the Hohenstaufen dukes of Suabia. Since the latter were connected by marriage with the Franconian house, the Guelfs led the attack on the prin-

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 298.

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 317.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 311.

ciple of hereditary succession to the throne. The election of Lothair was their victory, and it was the signal for the outbreak of civil war. The head of the insurrection against the king was, of course, Frederick of Hohenstaufen, seconded by his younger brother, Conrad, who was proclaimed anti-king. With them stood their half-brothers of Austria and the local rivals of the Guelfs in Saxony, chief among whom was Albert the Bear, margrave of Brandenburg. In the south, on the other hand, the Guelfs could generally count on the duke of Zähringen, whose lands had been made into a principality independent of Suabia. In the same way the rest of the German princes tended to ally with one or other of the two camps.

Lothair, in spite of early defeats, maintained the royal authority with surprising energy for a man of sixty, and after ten years of desultory fighting, the Hohenstaufen submitted on condition that they keep their hereditary possessions. The king made two trips to Italy, securing the imperial crown and vainly trying to conquer the Norman kingdom. On returning to Germany after his second expedition, he died in 1138. His reign, therefore, witnessed few dramatic events. Aside from the development of the Guelf-Hohenstaufen feud, its chief interest lies in the resumption by the Germans of their eastward expansion. In the eleventh century the Slavs had launched a successful counter-offensive and driven the invaders out of the whole region beyond the Elbe, destroying the work of civilization accomplished earlier by Otto I and his great margraves.<sup>10</sup> Now, under the leadership of Lothair, the Saxons once more occupied the Slavic borderlands and, thanks to the contemporary increase of population, permanently colonized them with settlers from the west.

Lothair III  
(1125-37)

Before Lothair died, he indicated his desire that his successor should be his son-in-law, Henry the Proud, who combined the duchies of Bavaria and Saxony and also held wide lands in Italy. But the very fact that the Guelf was so powerful and had been designated as heir to the throne caused the electors again to assert their freedom by naming his rival, Conrad of Hohenstaufen. The tables were thus completely turned: now it was a Hohenstaufen who wore the crown, a Guelf who rose in revolt. At once the king declared Henry deprived of his two duchies, giving Bavaria to Leopold of Austria and Saxony to Albert the

Conrad III  
(1138-52)

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 304.



Bear. Then, in 1139, the Guelf chieftain was carried off by a sudden illness and his place fell to a ten-year-old boy, later famous as Henry the Lion. Aided by widespread sympathy for their youthful leader, the Guelfs redoubled their efforts and in 1142 a general pacification restored Saxony to Henry in return for the recognition of Conrad's title to the throne. Profiting by this settlement, the king then joined Louis VII of France in his fruitless crusade,<sup>11</sup> absenting himself from Germany during the years 1147-49.

This period proved to be critical in more ways than one. Conrad had no such minister as Suger to look after his interests while he was away; so Germany was again swept by disorder. Italy was the scene of even more significant events. Roger of Sicily, as already noted, made use of the respite to consolidate his power in the peninsula, forcing concessions from the pope, attacking the Byzantine Empire, and occupying the African coast. To the north the cities of Lombardy, destroying all superior authority, emerged as full-grown communes.<sup>12</sup> The contagion even threatened the papal government at Rome, for none of the contemporary popes was able to control the situation. One of them was slain while attempting to crush a newly proclaimed commune, and his successor left the city altogether, to spend several years beyond the Alps. Meanwhile the Romans took into their midst Arnold of Brescia,<sup>13</sup> an eloquent radical who was devoting his talents to a fierce denunciation of the clergy for their wealth and political ambitions. At the height of the excitement Conrad returned from the east, but his plans for intervention were ended by his death in 1152.

The accession of Frederick Barbarossa (1152)

Dying, the king requested that the electors should pass over his infant son and proclaim instead his nephew Frederick, who had succeeded to the duchy of Suabia some years earlier. Through his mother Frederick was half Guelf in blood and was known to be an eminently just man, a brave soldier, and in all ways a fine fellow. So his election was virtually unanimous. About thirty at his coronation, the new king seemed both physically and morally the ideal hero of romance. According to contemporary descriptions, he had a handsome, merry face, with reddish-blond hair and beard, from which came his Italian nickname of Barbarossa.

<sup>11</sup> See below, p. 522.

<sup>12</sup> See above, pp. 363 f.

<sup>13</sup> See below, p. 509.

His body, though not tall, was perfectly proportioned. As a knight and a general he was rivaled only by Richard Lion-Heart, and in both statesmanship and personal character he was far superior to the English king. Even those who disliked his policy agreed that he was a worthy foe—a thoroughly imperial figure, like Otto the Great or Charlemagne. It was, indeed, the tradition of those men which colored his whole career and, while giving his reign its characteristic grandeur, ultimately proved a curse. The historian must always wonder how much greater a king he might have been, had he concentrated his splendid talents on less magnificent projects.

### 3. FREDERICK BARBAROSSA.

Frederick's first important act was to carry out his uncle's projected expedition to Italy. Henry the Lion, having been promised restoration in Bavaria, joined the king and with him crossed the Alps in the autumn of 1154. Assembling a diet at Roncaglia, the king secured formal recognition from the nobles of Lombardy and from some of the newly formed communes. Yet it was significant that the greatest of them, Milan, defied his authority. Momentarily Frederick had neither the time nor the resources for a long siege; so he merely destroyed one of the Milanese allies as an object lesson and hastened south to meet the pope. The latter was now Hadrian IV, by birth an Englishman named Nicholas Breakspear, who had already proved himself a worthy successor of Gregory VII. By means of an interdict<sup>14</sup> laid on the city, he had brought the Romans to terms and forced them to drive Arnold of Brescia into exile. Nevertheless, the pope's real power in his capital remained very uncertain, and he was on bad terms with William I, the new king of Sicily.

Frederick's  
first  
Italian  
expedition  
(1154-55)

Under these circumstances, Hadrian was only too willing, in return for political support, to give Frederick the imperial crown. On his part, Frederick gladly heeded the pope's request that Arnold of Brescia be arrested and delivered to the Roman authorities to be hanged. After that detail had been attended to, the king advanced rapidly on Rome. As usual, the pope rode outside the city to meet him, but, to Hadrian's amazement, Frederick refused the accustomed service of helping the pope to dismount. Only after he had lost a two-days' argument would the proud king

<sup>14</sup> An interdict was the prohibition of all or most sacraments within a particular territory.

agree to hold the papal stirrup. At last the formality was carried out and Frederick was crowned emperor. That event was the signal for another Roman insurrection which was still unsubdued when Frederick turned his back and hastily recrossed the Alps. The result of his first expedition had been to aggravate the situation for the pope, to alarm the cities of Lombardy, and to encourage disorder in Germany.

Com-  
promise  
with the  
Guelfs  
(1156-57)

One chief source of trouble in the northern kingdom was the question of Bavaria. Although promised to Henry the Lion, the duchy was actually in the possession of the Austrian margrave, called Henry Jasomirgott<sup>15</sup> after his favorite oath. After considerable difficulty, the matter was amicably settled in 1156. The Guelf regained Bavaria, but renounced all authority in Austria, which was kept by the margrave as a hereditary duchy, together with many attached privileges. In the same year Frederick married the daughter of the count of Burgundy (Franche-Comté) and so strengthened his position—otherwise one of mere dignity—in the kingdom of Arles. Then, having gained the support of the princes by a rather lavish distribution of favors, he prepared for a greater Italian expedition. Meanwhile relations with the pope had become badly strained. Hadrian, deserted by the newly crowned emperor, had been forced as a sheer matter of defense to renew the Norman alliance. This Frederick declared a breach of treaties already signed with him. He was also enraged by a papal letter which referred to the imperial crown as a *beneficium* conferred by the pope. Eventually Hadrian was prevailed on to explain that by the offensive word he had meant “benefit,” not “benefice”; yet the ill-feeling caused by the episode did not subside.

Frederick's  
second  
Italian  
expedition  
(1158-62)

In 1158 Frederick led a powerful army over the Alps, having as his principal objective the reduction of Lombardy. Milan, with the help of Pavia and other rival cities, was quickly starved into submission and once more the emperor's lordship was formally accepted throughout the Po Valley. At Roncaglia he called a second diet and there, surrounded by jurists trained in the newly arisen university at Bologna,<sup>16</sup> he posed as another Constantine, the absolute master of the world. Against his sovereign authority, custom could never establish a valid title. Having resumed into his own hands all regalian rights, he would graciously per-

<sup>15</sup> *Ja, so mir Gott (helfe)!—Yes, so help me God!* See above, p. 309 n.

<sup>16</sup> See below, p. 435.

mit his loyal subjects to exercise certain of them, but they must submit to officials named by him, pay him his just taxes, and recognize the supreme jurisdiction of his court. The ludicrous contrast between such lofty assertions and the conditions that had actually prevailed in Italy for over five hundred years evidently had no meaning for Frederick of Hohenstaufen. At home he displayed a keen understanding of men and a wise moderation of conduct; when he crossed the Alps, he seemed to lose all sense of reality.

The decrees of Roncaglia alarmed not only the cities which had already resisted his aggression, but also those which had hitherto supported him. The immediate result of his attempt to install appointed governors throughout Lombardy was a violent uprising at Milan. Once more, while awaiting reinforcements from Germany, Frederick sought to terrorize the opposition by making an example of a Milanese ally. The little city of Crema was captured after a heroic defense of seven months, and razed to the ground. Then, as Milan merely stiffened its opposition to all demands, it was invested by the imperial army. Meanwhile, in 1159, the anxious life of Hadrian IV had been brought to a sudden end by disease. His death was the signal for a violent contest over the succession. The majority of the cardinals finally cast their votes for Cardinal Roland, supporter of Hadrian's policy and friend of the Sicilian king. But in opposition to the new pope, who took the title of Alexander III, the imperial party set up another of the cardinals as Victor IV. He naturally obtained the support of Frederick and for a time controlled the city of Rome.

The siege  
of Milan  
and the  
election of  
Alexander  
III

Milan, having held out till the last moment, capitulated in 1162, to suffer destruction by fire and pillage. The population was scattered among four new sites and officially the city ceased to exist. All rebels hastened to make what peace they could with the emperor. Alexander, finding his position untenable, sought refuge in France, while Frederick, with his Italian kingdom thoroughly subdued, went home to receive the plaudits of his northern subjects. The imperial triumph was too great to be permanent. Frederick had scattered the opposition forces, but had not destroyed them. Under the papal leadership they were now to re-assemble in greater strength than ever.

Alexander's cause, despite his exile from Rome, continued to advance, even among the German clergy. Victor IV had relatively few supporters; after his death in 1164, although two other

The  
Lombard  
League

anti-popes were installed, it was soon evident that the schism could not long be maintained. In 1165 Alexander returned by sea to Messina, whence he was escorted to Rome by a Sicilian fleet. Meanwhile papal diplomacy, working in harmony with that of William I, had been busy throughout the west, blocking all efforts of Frederick to secure an understanding with Henry II of England, assuring the friendship of Venice and Genoa, and encouraging the Lombard communes to unite in common defense of their liberties. A league of Verona, Padua, and Vicenza openly raised the standard of revolt; and as the emperor prepared for a second great offensive, the allies were joined by other cities. By 1167 Frederick was again in Italy with a formidable army. Stopping only for a few minor operations in Lombardy, he swiftly marched on Rome, which was taken by storm as Alexander once more sought the protection of his Norman allies. Then, at the height of Frederick's success, plague broke out in his army, and this calamity, which was hailed by his enemies as an evident miracle of God, forced him to retreat.

During these same months the rebel cities, as a symbol of their strength and union, had rebuilt Milan, which, with its ancient population restored, once more headed the resistance to foreign domination. As Frederick's retreat turned into a rout, many hesitant communities joined the insurrection. Thus arose the famous Lombard League, which in 1168 came to control virtually the entire Po Valley and had the support of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. A few imperial strongholds, notably Pavia, still held aloof; but to offset the strategic importance of the latter city, the league now sponsored the establishment of a new town on the upper Po. Constructed with a view to warfare, it was given tremendous military strength, and in honor of the pope, whose diplomacy was largely responsible for its foundation, it was named Alesandria. Plainly, unless Frederick chose to abandon all hold on Italy, he would have to break the Lombard League by force of arms. Yet six years elapsed before he could muster sufficient strength for another campaign. Since the disaster of 1167 the ardor of the Germans for Italian adventure had distinctly cooled. And Henry the Lion, vexed by his failure to secure certain lands that had belonged to a relative, displayed an ominous hostility toward his imperial lord. When, indeed, the host again started south in 1174, the Guelf remained at home.

Avoiding the eastern passes, which were strongly held by the

league, Frederick now invaded Italy through Piedmont. Pavia and a few lesser cities declared for him and their combined armies advanced to the assault of Alessandria, the very existence of which was an affront to the imperial dignity. But all attacks were beaten off by the defenders and in the spring of 1175, on the approach of a formidable relief expedition from the east, Frederick abandoned the siege. Then ensued a year of futile negotiations, during which both sides prepared for the battle which alone could decide their quarrel. In May, 1176, the two forces met at Legnano and, after a desperate struggle, the imperial standards went down in irretrievable disaster. Frederick barely escaped with the fragments of his host, leaving his camp to be pillaged by the exultant troops of Lombardy. His defeat was quite inevitable, for even if he had been more fortunate at Legnano, he would have lost on some other field. The futility of German dominion in Italy had been repeatedly proved by the experience of the past two centuries. Since then the imperial project had been rendered doubly hazardous by the rapid growth of proud city republics across the north of the peninsula. By appealing to despotic principles of abstract law to justify his aggressive designs, Frederick had merely courted destruction.

The  
battle of  
Legnano  
(1176)

It must be admitted, however, that the emperor honestly faced the consequences of his defeat and did not, by refusing to reverse his policy, make a bad situation worse. Before the year was out, Frederick had made peace with Alexander III, recognizing him as pope and making whatever compromises were necessary to end the schism. Then, as had been promised, negotiations were opened for a permanent settlement with the Lombard League. But it was not until after Alexander's death that the final treaty was signed at Constance in 1183. By it the communes were formally invested with all the major privileges for which they had gone to war. In return they acknowledged the emperor's theoretical sovereignty, which, as a matter of fact, they had never sought to deny. Furthermore, they specifically allowed him the right to install their elected magistrates into office, to hear appeals from their courts, and to collect from them contributions of supplies when he came to Italy. The worth of the imperial authority which thus remained would, of course, depend on the extent to which it was enforced. With the passing of the German danger, all the local feuds blazed out again, and the Lombard League dis-

The  
Peace of  
Constance  
(1183)

solved into warring factions. It was quite possible that by skillful diplomacy Frederick could effectively maintain a position of supreme arbiter.

The fall  
of Henry  
the Lion

To the north, meanwhile, Guelf and Hohenstaufen had again come to blows. During Frederick's last campaign in Italy Henry the Lion had stubbornly refused service, and this fact in itself was enough to determine the emperor's subsequent action. The proceedings were of course made to conform to the law. Complaints against the duke led to his being summoned to court, and when he had thrice failed to answer, his lands were declared forfeit. Whatever his failings in Italy, Frederick proved that he was still master of Germany by an energetic war against the rebel. By 1182 both Saxony and Bavaria were in the emperor's hands, and Henry, completely humiliated, was forced on bended knee to crave the royal pardon. This he obtained, but of his wide territories no more than two Saxon castles were restored to him and he was banished for three years.

The fall of Henry the Lion is justly famous, for it brought about a momentous change in the map of Germany. The historic duchies of Saxony and Bavaria were never reconstituted. Although the son of Albert the Bear was now styled duke of Saxony, his lands were restricted to the eastern frontier, while a new duchy of Westphalia was created in the west for the archbishop of Cologne. As the result of similar dismemberment, it was only a fragment of the old Bavaria which was now secured, along with the ducal title, by the house of Wittelsbach.<sup>17</sup> The reign of Frederick Barbarossa thus completed a process begun in the previous century—that of breaking the ancient duchies into a multitude of petty states directly dependent on the king. By this time Franconia had long ceased to have political unity and Lorraine had become a mere geographic expression. Suabia for a time survived Saxony and Bavaria; it also was to disappear, as an effective political unit, with the passing of the Hohenstaufen dynasty.

The  
eastern  
frontier

Henceforth it was rather the principalities along the eastern border—notably Brandenburg and Austria—which gained increasing importance. Beyond them lay Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary, the rulers of which were all vassals of the German king. But of the three only one, the duke of Bohemia, could

<sup>17</sup> This family continued to rule in Bavaria until 1918.

normally be counted on for any useful service, and none of them was as yet really dominated by the emperor. In the twelfth century the most significant advance of German influence was to the north in the lands along the Baltic. Between the Elbe and the Oder, as noted above, colonization was recommenced under Lothair III, and this work was energetically pushed, during the early reign of Frederick, by the two rivals, Albert the Bear and Henry the Lion. Both princes were instrumental in bringing hundreds of Flemish and Westphalian peasants to drain and cultivate the marshy regions of Mecklenburg, Schwerin, Brandenburg, and Pomerania. The same period saw the beginning of many famous towns. Following the example of Conrad of Zähringen, whose successful foundation of Freiburg<sup>18</sup> was widely celebrated in southern Germany, Henry the Lion created at Munich a center for the Bavarian salt trade, and in his other duchy he reestablished a mercantile settlement at Lübeck—a favorable site, to secure which he had waged a sort of economic war with the local count. How much greater, in the history of European civilization, were these experiments in town-planning than all the Italian expeditions of all the emperors!

For Frederick Barbarossa there are only two other events to chronicle. In 1184 he had the satisfaction of marrying his son, already crowned as Henry VI, to Constance, daughter of Roger II and heiress of the Sicilian kingdom. Finally, in 1189, he left Germany with a splendid army to join Philip of France and Richard of England on the crusade. He never reached the Holy Land, being drowned, as the result of an unexplained accident, in a little river of Cilicia. To estimate the results of his reign is impossible without taking into account that of Henry VI. If the latter had lived to carry out his magnificent schemes, historians might well date from these years the opening of a new and magnificent age for central Europe. As it was, he died before the success of his policies could be determined, and with him perished the glory of the mediæval empire as it had been conceived by Frederick Barbarossa. A careful study of outstanding political developments in that age leads to the conviction that his ideals, though heroic, were impractical. The forward-looking princes of the twelfth century were not the Hohenstaufen, but Henry II of England, Philip Augustus of France, and Roger II of Sicily.

The  
Sicilian  
marriage  
(1184)

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 355.



## 4. INNOCENT III

Henry VI (1190-97) Under the son of Barbarossa the kingdoms of Sicily and Germany were brought into political association for the first time. After two centuries of intermittent effort, the German kings had yet failed to make their empire an actuality. Their authority in Italy and Burgundy, except on those rare occasions when they could appear at the head of a resistless army, remained little more than a legal fiction. Even in the homeland their government depended rather on personal command than on permanent administrative machinery. Could the German Henry VI be a successful king of Sicily and at the same time maintain his power in the north? The man who undertook this formidable task was much inferior to his father in charm, being unlovely both in body and in disposition. Yet the fact that Henry VI was hard and cruel by no means prevented his being an excellent ruler; by natural ability, as well as by training, the new king was well equipped for a statesmanlike career.

At the moment of his accession Henry VI was confronted by two events of crucial importance. In 1189 Henry the Lion, who had been spending his years of exile with Richard of England, his brother-in-law, took advantage of the emperor's absence to return to Germany and revive the Guelf war. Then, just before the end of the same year, William II of Sicily died childless. The Norman magnates, disliking the thought of the Hohenstaufen succession, proclaimed Tancred, an illegitimate son of Roger II, who received the support of the pope, of the English king, and of the Guelf faction. To break this coalition, Henry VI obtained peace with Henry the Lion by offering him further concessions in Saxony, and in 1190 led an army into Italy. The aged Celestine III, who had now become pope, agreed to bestow on him the imperial crown in return for the destruction of Tusculum, a rival city hated by the Romans. This rather discreditable bargain was carried out and the new emperor proceeded to invade Apulia. There he made no headway against Tancred, who, though extraordinarily ugly, proved himself a vigorous and popular ruler. Meanwhile Henry the Lion had broken the peace just made and Germany was again ablaze with civil war.

After his early reverses, the emperor was favored by a remarkable run of luck. Richard, as we have seen, was captured by the duke of Austria and, despite all the alleged sanctity of the cru-

sader, was imprisoned by Henry VI. Thus he was able to enter enormously profitable negotiations with the Angevin dominions, with Philip of France, and with the Guelfs. By 1194 the affair was brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Richard was released on the payment of a huge ransom. Henry the Lion, as part of the settlement, accepted another compromise and survived it just one year. Then Tancred died with only a child to succeed him, and as the incompetent pope still offered no effective resistance, Henry rapidly conquered the Sicilian kingdom. Finally, as if to celebrate her lord's victory, the forty-year-old Constance presented him with a son and heir, the future Frederick II. Following up these dazzling successes, Henry now opened negotiations with the German princes and with the pope to make his imperial office hereditary. At the same time he began preparations for a new and greater crusade which should restore Christian rule throughout the Holy Land and should bring him the sovereignty of the east, perhaps end in the conquest of Constantinople and the union of the two empires. Already the master of Italy, he could look forward to the magnificent combination of all the Hohenstaufen and Norman ambitions. His plans were doomed never to be put to the test. Suddenly stricken by fever, Henry died in 1197, at the age of thirty-two. Through one of the most dramatic reversals in history, his reign introduced a new age of magnificence, not for the empire, but for the papacy.

The conquest of Sicily (1194)

During the seventeen years that followed the death of Alexander III the Roman see was held by five short-lived popes of second-rate ability. The last of them, Celestine III, was over ninety when he died and, as already noted, he had proved himself quite unable to check the alarming advance of the imperial power in Italy. Now, in 1198, the cardinals decided that the critical position of the church demanded the election of a young and vigorous leader. The papal tiara was therefore bestowed on the cardinal deacon Lothair of Segni, who was just thirty-seven. Descended from a noble Italian family, Lothair had studied theology at Paris and canon law at Bologna; but the chief reason for his election was undoubtedly his reputation as a practical statesman. Innocent III, as the new pope chose to be styled, was a man who, under other circumstances, might have been a great king or emperor, for he was endowed with surpassing talent for business management, politics, government, and diplomacy. In his capacity to grasp the essentials of a situation and to turn it to

The accession of Innocent III (1198)

full advantage, he has had few equals in history. Once he had made a mistake, Innocent was quick to realize the fact and to modify his strategy accordingly. In such respects he showed himself a clever opportunist and thereby earned the reputation of being decidedly unscrupulous. Yet his fundamental sincerity cannot be doubted: the ideal to which he devoted himself was that of Gregory VII, the supremacy of church over state. His failure quite to attain the moral grandeur of his distinguished predecessor may in part be explained as the consequence of his amazing success. He was never called on to be a martyr to a desperate cause.

The  
imperial  
succession

The first great question to challenge Innocent's statesmanship was that of the imperial succession, for the sudden death of Henry VI in 1197 had thrown all central Europe into feverish disorder. The Hohenstaufen plan for a hereditary throne was now hopelessly ruined. The electors, of course, would have none of it and refused to consider the three-year-old Frederick II as a candidate. He remained, however, lawful king of Sicily; and to secure him in his rights, his mother at once appealed to Innocent, again recognizing papal lordship and even renouncing some of the ecclesiastical powers enjoyed by her father. When she died in November, 1198, Frederick by feudal custom became the ward of the pope, who thus was able, while protecting the orphan and defending justice, to reestablish the complete independence of the southern from the northern kingdom. In Germany a majority of the magnates finally declared for Philip of Suabia, youngest son of Barbarossa, but almost at once an opposition party elected Otto, second son of Henry the Lion. The result was a civil war that rapidly involved most of Europe.

As Otto's candidacy had from the first been warmly advocated by Richard of England, that of Philip was immediately espoused by the French king, and before long all the barons along both sides of the imperial frontier were drawn into alliance with one group or the other. Accordingly, just as John succeeded Richard on the English throne, the revived struggle of Guelf and Hohenstaufen became identified in the west with that of Capetian and Angevin. In Italy, too, the civil war had momentous consequences. With the collapse of Henry VI's political structure, a violent anti-German reaction swept the peninsula, and, as was natural, Innocent gave to it what added impetus he could. By helping to drive imperial officials out of Tuscany and the adjoining regions on the east, he was able to make good his claim to many disputed ter-

ritories and to reestablish on a firmer basis the papal government in the city of Rome. Finally, after considerable difficulty, he defeated all German attempts to hold Sicily and enforced his sole wardship over Frederick II. Having most of Italy under his authority, Innocent thus was in a good position to intervene in Germany.

With the right of the Germans to elect their own king the pope ostensibly did not interfere; it was only because each of the rivals sought the imperial crown that he asserted the power to review the whole affair of the disputed election. How could he decide between the two without examining the validity of their respective credentials? This took time, which Innocent used to good advantage for diplomatic negotiations. While Philip proudly stated his title as one not open to question, Otto was willing to make generous promises. Under such circumstances, the Hohenstaufen claim could hardly find impartial consideration at Rome, and Innocent's decision, though elaborately supported by legal argumentation, was actually dictated by political motives. In 1201 he pronounced the Guelf rightful king and excommunicated all who opposed him. Otto, in return, pledged his assistance in extending papal rule throughout central Italy and in enforcing the papal lordship over Sicily. The next problem was to carry out the decree; but before we can understand Innocent's later maneuvers in this connection, we must examine his relations with other monarchs.

Innocent's  
intervention in  
Germany

In the light of their respective affiliations in Germany, one would expect Innocent to favor the Angevin in preference to the Capetian. This natural tendency of the papal policy was further encouraged by a violent quarrel that had arisen in connection with the private morals of Philip Augustus. The latter in 1193 wedded a Danish princess named Ingeborg, but immediately repudiated her, securing an ecclesiastical divorce on a dubious allegation of blood-relationship. Then, although Celestine III had quashed the action of the French prelates, the king proceeded to marry Agnes of Meran. In 1198 the case was inherited by Innocent, who forthwith excommunicated the obdurate king and placed his lands under interdict. Opinion in France generally favored the pope, and this position, on the eve of his great struggle with John, Philip found extremely inconvenient. So he grudgingly agreed to a retrial, and eventually, after Agnes had conveniently died, went through the form of a reconciliation with

The  
divorce  
of Philip  
Augustus

Ingeborg. It was not, however, until a dozen more years had passed that he consented to allow the injured lady her honors as queen, and then his action was guided by political necessity. Meanwhile, when Innocent sought, by invoking Christian ideals, to halt the king's victorious campaign against the Angevin, he was virtually told to mind his own business. The war went on, resulting, as we have already seen, in the conquest of Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou. Just at this moment John, too, became embroiled in papal controversy.

The con-  
test with  
King John

The trouble began with the death in 1205 of Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury and justiciar under Richard. According to precedent, the right to elect his successor then devolved upon the cathedral chapter, which at Canterbury was organized as a monastic body. Without waiting for royal license, the monks chose one of their own number and sent him off to obtain the papal confirmation. But the news of the affair leaked out, and when the king heard of it he forced a new election, in which a royal candidate was named. Innocent, as was to be expected, was not slow to take advantage of the situation. After calling representatives from both sides and listening to their prolonged arguments, the pope on technical grounds pronounced both elections invalid and finally prevailed on those of the chapter who were present to accept Stephen Langton, an able Englishman trained in the papal service. John, in a furious passion, swore that he would never allow Langton in the kingdom and maintained his hold on the archbishop's lands. Consequently, in 1208, the pope placed England under an interdict and released John's subjects from their oaths of allegiance. Undaunted, the king seized all the property of the church in England and so placed himself in position, through the distribution of subsidies, to coerce the clergy into obeying him. This was the situation for more than five years, during which time, as was later admitted, he took over £100,000 in ecclesiastical revenue; and that was only a fraction of what the church really lost.

Perhaps, if John had not been personally unpopular, he could have withstood the pope indefinitely. He was the head of a powerful administration and, as long as he had plenty of cash, he could always hire mercenary troops to do his bidding. But John's despotic government was generally hated, and under the official encouragement of the papacy an uprising of the discontented baronage was only too likely. Furthermore, the rebels

would now have the assistance of Philip Augustus, whom Innocent had formally authorized to lead a sort of crusade against the reprobate Angevin. John, though indifferent to religious penalties, had good reason to fear the invasion of the French king. So, in 1213, when Philip's expedition was ready to sail, he suddenly announced his submission to the papal terms. He agreed to recognize Langton, to restore all ecclesiastical property, to compensate the church for the damage which it had sustained, and to do whatever else was necessary to secure absolution. In addition, he formally gave his kingdom to the Apostolic See and received it back as a papal fief, performing homage for it to the pope's representative in England and promising in recognition of his vassalage an annual payment of a thousand marks.

Over the German king Innocent had been able to win no such brilliant victory. The papal recognition, though it brought a good many recruits to Otto's camp, was enough only to prolong the deadlock. Otto was neither intelligent nor personally attractive; but Philip of Suabia, in spite of his good looks and charming manners, was similarly lacking in statesmanship. So the civil war dragged on, and Innocent was considering a shift of policy when the murder of Philip in 1208 assured Otto the triumph. Until he had obtained the imperial crown in the following year, the Guelf remained entirely submissive to the pope; then he abruptly turned about and revived all the Hohenstaufen claims. Outraged by this display of ingratitude, Innocent launched against him the anathema of the church and joined with Philip Augustus in advancing the claims of the young Sicilian king. In 1211 a diet of rebel princes at Nuremberg formally offered the German crown to Frederick II, who repeated the promises earlier made by Otto, and in addition guaranteed that Sicily should never be incorporated with his northern states.

The  
breach  
with  
Otto IV  
(1210)

Down to this point the pope's diplomatic position had been entirely logical. At first he had supported Guelf and Angevin against Hohenstaufen and Capetian; then, by his reversal of 1208-10, he had swung round to the side of the latter pair. John's action in 1213, however, resulted in a situation to tax the ingenuity of even a master-statesman like Innocent III. He had, of course, to accept John's deliberately planned submission and to forbid the pending French expedition. Yet John continued to subsidize Otto in Germany and Philip refused to abandon his plans for the conquest of England. How then could the pope

The  
battle of  
Bouvines  
(1214)

be the ally of John against Philip while remaining the ally of Philip and Frederick against Otto? Actually he could do little more than wait until, in 1214, the French king crushed the forces of the Angevin-Guelf coalition at Bouvines. This battle ruined not only John's dream of recovering his lost fiefs, but also the cause of Otto in Germany. Within a year the unfortunate Guelf was virtually a fugitive on his ancestral estates in Saxony, where he continued to maintain a losing defense until his death in 1218.

The  
barons'  
revolt in  
England  
(1214-16)

No sooner had Innocent been relieved of one dilemma than he was confronted by another. John's crushing defeat at Bouvines was the signal for the outburst of a long-smoldering insurrection in England. Baronage, clergy, and the city of London made common cause against the hated master whom, momentarily, they found unprepared. To gain time, John granted their demands in the famous Magna Carta of 1215,<sup>19</sup> meanwhile appealing to his lord for support. Innocent at once absolved him from his oath, ordered the rebels to lay down their arms, and, when they refused to do so, placed them under excommunication. Still they would not yield. So, by a strange fortune, the pope now found arrayed against him all his staunch supporters of a few years before, including Stephen Langton, his own nominee for the see of Canterbury. Nor was Philip Augustus more obedient. In direct opposition to the papal command, he sent to England his son, the later Louis VIII, who was admitted to London and recognized as king by the baronial party. Then, at the critical moment, John's death in October, 1216, removed the chief cause of unrest and the insurrection collapsed—just too late for Innocent to know that the papal cause had again triumphed, for the great pope had himself died in July.

The papal  
theocracy:  
Its ap-  
parent  
strength

In the foregoing pages we have examined only the major episodes in the diplomatic career of Innocent III, but they are sufficient to illustrate his ideals and methods. He strove for no less than the combined spiritual and temporal headship of the Christian world—that is to say, for a perfect theocracy. He did not create the ambition, which may be clearly detected in the words and acts of his greatest predecessors. It was Innocent, however, who for the first time brought the design appreciably near execution. Under him the domain of the church came to include, in addition to the territory about Rome, the duchy of

<sup>19</sup> See below, p. 556.

Spoletto, the march of Ancona, and Romagna;<sup>20</sup> besides, the pope claimed the whole of Tuscany. To the south lay the kingdom of Sicily, a papal fief, long held by Innocent as guardian of Frederick II. To the north were the Lombard cities, generally allied with the pope against the king of Germany. Even the latter, through the aggressive diplomacy of Innocent, had come to be treated very much as a dependent of the Apostolic See. The kings of England, Portugal, Aragon, and Denmark had formally acknowledged themselves vassals of the pope, and as a result of the wars in Germany and the Fourth Crusade,<sup>21</sup> Innocent came to have similar authority in Poland, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, and in other parts of the old Byzantine Empire. The union of all Europe in one Christian commonwealth seemed actually on the verge of accomplishment. Beyond that lay the prospect of healing the Greek schism and, by means of a revived crusade, of reconquering the orient.

There was, however, another side to the picture, which no one who studies the career of Innocent III can fail to perceive. His success in dealing with the Holy Roman Empire was very largely the result of its inherent weakness. And his victory in placing Frederick II on the throne proved anything but a blessing to his successors. The papal lordship over isolated states like Portugal was rendered advantageous by local conditions which were subject to change at any moment. The vassalage of the English king was a mere by-product of the Angevin-Capetian war and, as we have seen, was hard to reconcile with the pope's contemporary policy on the continent. Nor did it save John from defeat at Bouvines, from the great revolt of 1215, or from further attacks by the French king. The latter, in fact, while ultimately yielding in the matter of his divorce, never allowed the pope to dictate his conduct in essential questions of state. Like the Norman rulers of England and of Sicily, Philip Augustus treated the papal alliance as a mere political arrangement, quite independent of the Roman bishop's spiritual headship—precisely the attitude which was to be stubbornly maintained by the great princes of subsequent centuries.

From these considerations it would follow that Innocent's success was due not to the general acceptance of the theocratic ideal,

Its actual  
weakness

<sup>20</sup> The march of Ancona was the old Pentapolis; Romagna, the old exarchate of Ravenna.

<sup>21</sup> See below, pp. 524 f.



but rather to his own superlative skill in diplomacy, aided by a very fortunate turn of events over which he had no real control. The design of a Christian commonwealth of Europe was doomed to failure by two principal facts: that succeeding popes could not all be men of Innocent's peculiar genius, and that the rivalries of European politics were as little compatible with Christian idealism then as they are today. If the pope chose to identify himself with the cause of world domination, he had to forgo his spiritual leadership. There was no alternative.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

#### I. THE SCHOOLS OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

THE revival of learning sponsored by Charlemagne had a number of permanent results.<sup>1</sup> It widely extended a system of elementary education, it introduced a greatly improved handwriting, and it led to the preservation of many ancient books. Such activity was of course centered in the schools, those either of monasteries or of cathedrals. When, in the following period of anarchy, so many churches were destroyed and so many clergy were slain, scholarship threatened to perish with them. Yet, obscurely, the old traditions were preserved. Otto the Great did much to restore education throughout his kingdom, and similar efforts on the part of the French princes were not without influence. A more important factor, however, was the economic recovery which brought new life to all western Europe in the eleventh century. At that time a few ancient abbeys continued to be prominent as centers of learning, but in general the monastic reform urged by Cluny and other houses was wholly religious in character and stimulated no fresh interest in scholarly pursuits. Accordingly, the foremost teachers and students of the age were attracted rather to the famous cathedral schools—among them Cologne, Liège, Utrecht, Reims, Laon, Paris, Tours, and Chartres.

The new prominence of the cathedral school

In these schools the method of instruction remained that of Alcuin. The books studied were still the ordinary texts on the liberal arts, together with the Bible, the works of the church fathers, and occasional classic authors. Since the ninth century little had been added to the learning of Latin Christendom. Few writers, in fact, had attained the intellectual level of the Carolingian age. Between 850 and 1050 there was only one remarkable scholar in western Europe—Pope Sylvester II, better known as Gerbert.<sup>2</sup> By the twelfth century a series of marvelous legends had clustered about his name, to be repeated in all seriousness by

Gerbert  
(d. 1003)

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 303.

the English chronicler, William of Malmesbury. Gerbert, it was alleged, had stolen from a Moorish sorcerer in Spain a book of magic, by means of which he manufactured for himself a brazen head with the power of prophetic speech. He solved the riddle of a mysterious statue in Rome and so discovered an underground palace filled with treasure. But his black art failed to give him the immortality which he had been led to expect, and on his death-bed he repented having sold himself to the devil.

The kernel of truth in all this romancing is merely that, as a young man, Gerbert studied for a time in the county of Barcelona and there acquired a smattering of Arabic science. Subsequently, as head of the cathedral school at Reims, he earned great fame for erudition and, as already noted, became the tutor and friend of the emperor Otto III. From the writings of his pupil, Richer, as well as from his own compositions, we know pretty accurately what the attainments were that eventually led to his being thought a magician. Instead of being satisfied with the ordinary texts on the *trivium*, he gave his pupils a direct introduction to such authors as Vergil, Horace, Terence, and Juvenal. His letters, indeed, show him an ardent collector of books, building what for that age was a splendid library of the classics. In this respect, obviously, he carried on the best traditions of the grammarians at the court of Charlemagne. Yet to us, as to his contemporaries, Gerbert's most remarkable work was in the field of the *quadrivium*.

Astro-  
nomical  
instru-  
ments

Here, it should be remembered, the standard authorities of his day were Boëthius and Isidore of Seville, whose shortcomings have already been noted. Gerbert knew neither Greek nor Arabic; such of his teachings as were not derived from the ordinary Latin texts he must have picked up in the course of his travels—presumably through some sort of contact with Arabic learning in Spain. Beyond the Pyrenees there were plenty of scholars, especially Jews, well versed in both Latin and Arabic. To learn from them something of oriental science would not be at all difficult; the strange fact is that apparently no one except Gerbert had enough intellectual curiosity to seek the information. However that may be, it is certain that he constructed armillary spheres<sup>3</sup> to illustrate the earth, the subdivisions of its surface, the heaven

<sup>3</sup> From *armilla*, a bracelet; for an armillary sphere is like a globe surrounded by bracelets. See Figure 7.

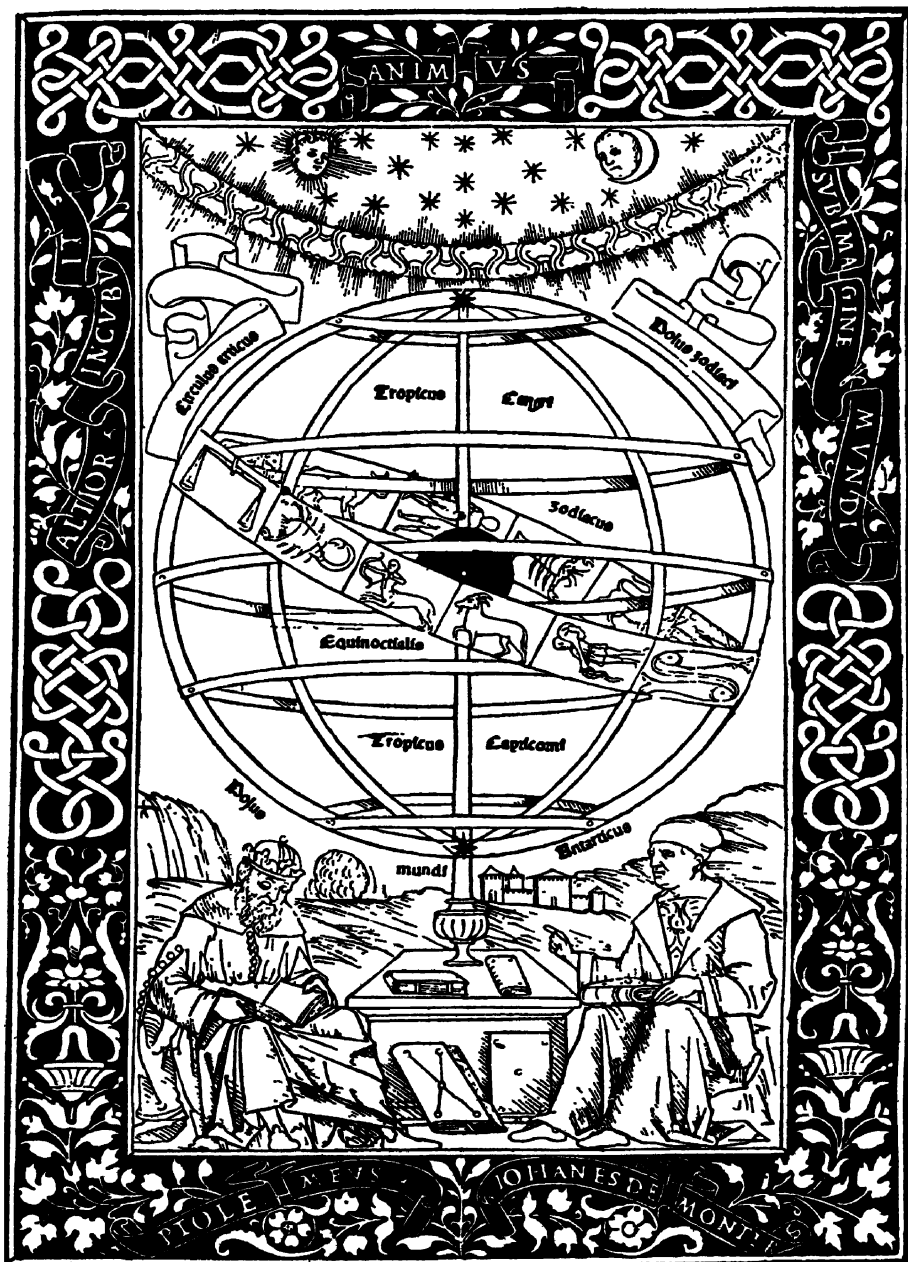


FIGURE 7.—AN ARMILLARY SPHERE: FRONTISPIECE TO THE *Epitome of Ptolemy's Almagest*.  
By Johannes Müller (Regiomontanus), Venice, 1496.

of the fixed stars, the signs of the zodiac, and the planetary orbits about the earth. All this, though familiar to every student of Ptolemy for many centuries, must indeed have seemed like magic to the simple Latins of the tenth century.

The  
abacus

In music we are told that Gerbert explained the mathematical basis of the science by means of vibrating strings, as had been done since the days of Pythagoras, and that he constructed some sort of pipe organ. But his most significant contribution to European culture was probably his work on the abacus.<sup>4</sup> Although this instrument—still the favorite of the Chinese laundryman—had been employed throughout the ancient world, it seems to have been forgotten in the west; at least there is no mention of it in either Boëthius or Isidore. Mathematically, its significance lies in the fact that, whether made with beads on a wire or with counters between lines, it enables the user to vary the worth of a digit according to the column in which it is placed—as can be done in arithmetic by using the zero. Under the decimal system, for instance, a counter in the first abacus column is 1, in the second 10, in the third 100, and so on. Addition and subtraction are rendered very easy. Division can be accomplished by finding the number of times one number can be subtracted from another; multiplication, by reversing the process. Such was the knowledge now expounded by Gerbert. Two centuries before he wrote, the Arabs had perfected an arithmetic based on the employment of the zero.<sup>5</sup> Gerbert apparently learned the Arabic (really Hindu) figures from 1 to 9, but all that he did with them was to place them on his abacus counters, using, for example, a counter inscribed 8 instead of eight counters. Having no knowledge of the zero, he could not have understood Arabic arithmetic. Such was the greatest mathematician of northwestern Europe between the sixth and the twelfth centuries!

Dialectical  
study

Through Gerbert's influence, scholars of the succeeding generations continued to display a revived interest in the *quadrivium*, especially in connection with the use of the abacus. Yet, on the whole, the most prominent development of eleventh-century education was in dialectic, the study of which soon became a sort of craze and tended to dominate all other intellectual attainments.

<sup>4</sup> The abacus was in general use among traders throughout the Moslem world. For quick reckoning it was customary to draw the necessary columns in the dust.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 208.

Though hailed by the men of that age as the essence of all rational speculation, dialectic was not philosophy at all. Actually the student did not advance beyond certain logical essays of Aristotle—the only works of the famous Greek that had been translated into Latin. Plato's name was revered, but of his original teachings almost nothing was known except one portion of one dialogue. What passed for Platonism in the Middle Ages was really Neo-Platonism,<sup>6</sup> the mystic philosophy which had been especially praised by St. Augustine. The mediæval scholar got all his fundamental concepts as part of a traditional religion taught him by the infallible church. As a loyal Christian, he had to maintain the mental attitude that is commonly recognized as Neo-Platonic; that is to say, he had to find ultimate reality in a divine idea. He might be Aristotelian only in logic. And could logic give him any fresh knowledge? Could it ever do more than develop the truths already accepted on faith? It is not surprising that in the eleventh century there were as yet no positive answers to these questions.

A famous subject of discussion since the days of Socrates had been that of universals. It may be said, for example, that we cannot identify a certain individual thing as an apple without first having an idea of *apple* in general. Is, then, our knowledge of the particular derived from the general idea, or vice versa? Can the latter exist without the former? If so, where does it exist? In the real world? What is existence? What is reality? On coming to the fringe of this great problem, Porphyry's *Isagoge*—an elementary handbook—refuses to enter upon it. Whether or not universals exist apart from the senses, remarks the author, is a matter of the highest interest and one that demands further investigation. Being thus recommended by a standard text, the argument was taken up with avidity by the more advanced students of dialectic.

Nominal-  
ism and  
realism

Out of the ensuing discussion emerged a certain Roscellinus, who defended the thesis that universals are not real, but only names (*nomina*). This doctrine, nominalism, was of course denounced by all who, while disagreeing in their definitions of reality, held that universals were something more than words. It was furthermore assailed as being contrary to the orthodox faith. How, for instance, could a Christian assert that the church

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 19.

had no real existence apart from the men who made up the congregation of believers? The opposite, technically known as realism, was ably supported by Anselm, abbot of Bec and subsequently archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>7</sup> Nominalism, said he, was not only philosophical nonsense, but was incompatible with the dogma of the Trinity; and his opinion was confirmed by a council at Reims in 1092, which forced Roscellinus to withdraw some of his statements.

Substance  
and  
accidents

Meanwhile there had also been much debate on the allied problem of substance and accidents. According to Aristotelian logic as presented by Porphyry and Boëthius, an accident is an attribute which an individual member of a group may or may not have. As horses are found of various colors, sizes, and dispositions, something called horse may be understood apart from the accidents of color, size, and disposition. But, the schoolmen wanted to know, if every accident is thus removed, will there still be a substance *horse*, which has real existence apart from all perception by the senses? The realist would say Yes; the nominalist might say No. The church would not interfere as long as the disputants talked of indifferent things. Suppose, however, attention was given to bread. In the sacrament of the eucharist the authorities of the church taught that bread, on consecration by the priest, was changed to flesh. Yet, after this miracle had been performed, what the communicant received still looked like bread, felt like bread, and tasted like bread. Could not this substance be separated from its accidents? As early as 1079 Berengar of Tours, an able man trained in the famous school of Chartres, was condemned by a papal synod for saying that the doctrine of transubstantiation was contrary to reason.

It was thus proved dangerous to carry abstract discussion to a point where it was applied to articles of faith. Nevertheless, most scholars of this age found no contradiction between the teaching of the church and the logic of the schools. Having been educated in the Latin tradition of the west, they were interested in practical theology rather than in metaphysical speculation. And if they examined the chaotic jumble of writings that had accumulated in the past five centuries, they could find a wealth of problems to occupy their rational faculties. The man who rose to fame by demonstrating this truth was Abélard.

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 373.

## 2. ABÉLARD AND HIS CRITICS

The man destined to be the most famous scholar of the early twelfth century, and one of the most famous lovers of all time, was born in 1079 near Nantes on the border of Brittany. He was the eldest son of a feudal noble and was christened Peter, somehow obtaining in later life the nickname of Abélard (Abælardus). Though by birth destined for a military career, he early became so enamored of learning that he abandoned his heritage to a younger brother, relinquishing, he tells us in his autobiographical letter,<sup>8</sup>

Abélard's  
early life

the court of Mars that I might be educated in the lap of Minerva. And inasmuch as I preferred the equipment of dialectic to all the teachings of philosophy, I exchanged those weapons for these, and to the trophies of war preferred the conflicts of discussion. Thereafter, perambulating divers provinces in search of discussion, wherever I had heard the study of this art to flourish, I became an emulator of the Peripatetics.

That is to say, the youthful Abélard joined the horde of foot-loose students who at this time could be found along the roads leading to every cathedral school in northern France. And so, inevitably, he came to Paris.

There, at the close of the eleventh century, the most eminent logician was William of Champeaux, an extreme realist. Abélard, being the sort that delights in opposition, at once challenged his explanation of universals and eventually compelled him to shift his ground. With complete effrontery, the student then opened a school of his own outside Paris, attracting most of the pupils from the discredited William. His success, however, filled the authorities with such jealousy that they used their influence to drive the upstart first out of one place and then out of another. So Abélard decided to study theology under the learned doctor, Anselm of Laon.<sup>9</sup> But this old fogey, says Abélard, was notable only for his fluency. Of real intelligence he had none. "When he lighted a fire, he filled his house with smoke, instead of lighting it with the blaze." As usual, Abélard showed his disgust and, when he was challenged to improve on Anselm, actually began lecturing on the Scriptures themselves, rather than on some com-

His  
prowess  
in the  
schools

<sup>8</sup> The following translation and those on pp. 423-24 are reprinted from C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, by permission of, and special arrangement with, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers.

<sup>9</sup> Not to be confused with Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, above, p. 420.



mentary. What had begun in jest ended in earnest, for the volunteer master soon found himself surrounded by a crowd of enthusiastic note-takers. Then the authorities once more intervened and Abélard's career at Laon came to a sudden end. This, of course, is his own account, and he was never one to hide his light under a bushel. Yet, in spite of his insufferable vanity, Abélard's talent gained recognition; by 1115 he is found holding a mastership at Paris, which William of Champeaux had deserted to become bishop of Châlons. And henceforth we have the testimony of many independent sources that Abélard made a tremendous sensation, charming an increasing host of pupils by the keenness of his intellect and the beauty of his exposition.

Abélard  
and  
Héloïse

Now, while Abélard was at the height of his renown, came the love idyl with Héloïse, which quickly changed into tragedy. Their story should be read from their own immortal letters; here it is impossible to do more than mention one or two outstanding points of supreme interest to every student of the Middle Ages. Héloïse was the niece of a canon at Notre-Dame, a girl in her teens, famed for her extraordinary learning as well as for her beauty. Abélard was in his thirties and had lived continentally all his life. His account of the affair, it should be remembered, was composed long afterwards, when he was a monk, embittered by shame and affliction, suffering from a persecution mania, and writing to justify himself in the eyes of pious enemies. It is very hard to imagine him a "ravening wolf" deliberately pouncing on a "tender lamb." Wise in dialectic, he was very foolish in love, which came upon him quite naturally. Having taken only minor orders, he was still free to marry; yet, if he did so, he would permanently exclude himself from an ecclesiastical career. On that account, Héloïse at first refused to be more than his mistress; then, after a son had been born to them, she unwillingly agreed to marriage and they became lawful man and wife. Still thinking only of Abélard, who never thought of any one but himself, she tried to keep the wedding a secret and so brought about a series of misunderstandings with her uncle. Believing that he had been tricked, the latter contrived a brutal assault on Abélard, mutilating him in such a way as would not only ruin his life with Héloïse but also prevent his ever becoming a priest. The proud master of the schools thus had no recourse but to take monastic vows, and at his request Héloïse became a nun.

For the next dozen years or so Abélard led a wretched exist-

ence, moving from place to place and always finding trouble. In what community could he be a meek and submissive brother? He returned to teaching, only to have his book on theology condemned by those who, he believed, either could not or would not understand it. Entering the wilderness, he became a hermit; and even there he was sought out by students from Paris who prevailed upon him to renew his lectures. By their labor his straw hut was turned into a commodious house of stone and timber, which in gratitude he named the Paraclete (Comforter). Then reviving fame brought revived fears of persecution. He accepted the headship of an abbey in Brittany, in which barbarous spot he was quickly more miserable than ever. Thus he was led to write the *Historia Calamitatum* (The History of My Calamities). In form it was a letter, intended to make a friend forget his own lesser misfortunes; but that looks like a literary device. At any rate, the letter was soon given wide publicity—something which Abélard never shunned.

The  
*Historia*  
*Calamita-*  
*tatum*

Héloïse, in the meantime, had been made abbess of a little community of nuns established in the abandoned Paraclete. Since taking the veil when she was hardly twenty, she had had no word from the man who had once been her husband. Now, finally, there came into her hands a copy of the *Historia Calamitatum*, and we may easily imagine how she would be affected by this deliberate probing into ancient wounds. Héloïse broke the silence of long dreary years, and with it all monastic convention :

The letters  
of Héloïse

To her master, nay father, to her husband, nay brother; his handmaid, nay daughter, his spouse, nay sister; to Abélard, Héloïse.

It is a piteous letter. She offers him sympathy in his afflictions, but reminds him that she too has been plunged in grief. He alone can give her solace. Her unbounded love for him is known to all, and she, at least, cannot regard that love coldly and bewail it as a sin. She thinks of him as he was—famous, handsome, brilliant; a great scholar, yet more wonderful to her as a singer of love songs! She knows that she may not see him, but may he not write to her? Abélard's answer is such as might be expected from a father confessor—very proper and very distant. He offers her spiritual consolation and asks that she and her community of sisters pray for him. When he is dead, his body is to be brought to the Paraclete and there buried.

To this Héloïse replies in impassioned revolt against the cruelty

of her fate. How can he speak of dying? The very thought is death to her. She has only one joy in life: to know that he is yet alive. There is no use in pretending. She is racked by memories. The torment of fierce longing will not leave her even during the solemnity of divine service. She despairs of cure, knowing that, miserable hypocrite, she has no hope in heaven.

But in the whole period of my life (God wot) I have ever feared to offend thee rather than God; I seek to please thee rather than Him. Thy command brought me, not the love of God, to the habit of religion. See how unhappy a life I must lead, more wretched than all others, if I endure these things here in vain, having no hope of reward in the future. For a long time thou, like many others, hast been deceived by my simulation, so as to mistake hypocrisy for religion; and thus, strongly commending thyself to our prayers, what I expect from thee thou demandest from me. Do not, I beseech thee, presume so highly of me, nor cease by praying to assist me. Do not deem me healed, nor withdraw the grace of thy medicine. Do not believe me to be not in want, nor delay to succor my necessity. Do not think this strength, lest I fall before thou hold up the falling.

If there is any one who has been led to believe that people in the Middle Ages had no "modern" emotions, let him read the letters of Héloïse. She was exceptional among women of her day only through her learning and, perhaps, her bravery in disregarding convention. But we must return to the story. Another letter from Abélard convinced Héloïse that resignation was all that was left her; so she requested merely professional advice—a disquisition on the origin of nuns and a modification of the Benedictine Rule for the guidance of her community. These Abélard sent, and their correspondence ended. Shortly afterwards he somehow obtained release from his abbacy and again set up a school on the outskirts of Paris. The result was a summons before the Council of Sens (1141), where the famous Bernard of Clairvaux<sup>10</sup> secured his condemnation for heresy. Abélard died in the next year while on his way to make a personal appeal at Rome. According to his request, his body was secretly taken to the Paraclete, where Héloïse too was laid a score of years later. Long before, we may hope, she had found the spiritual peace of which she had once despaired.

If now, in the light of Abélard's stormy career, we try to evalu-

<sup>10</sup> See below, p. 427.

ate the quality and significance of his teaching, we must first of all rid our minds of various notions popularized by admiring historians of the nineteenth century. Abélard was not a profound philosopher, much less what is commonly known as a free-thinker. He never disputed the power of the church to dictate in matters of Christian faith and discipline, nor did he ever rebel against its constituted authorities. He accepted without question the truths embodied in Holy Scripture or otherwise made known through sacred tradition. He merely insisted that, to supplement and develop revelation, one could rightfully employ the reason with which man had been endowed by the Lord. And in support of this opinion he could cite all the greatest doctors of Christendom. In fact, any one who denied it might well expose himself to prosecution as a heretic, for how could a Christian maintain that Christianity was contrary to reason? Obviously the only question at issue was one of emphasis and proportion.

Abélard's  
doctrines

Anselm had nicely stated the orthodox position in his famous sentence: *Credo ut intelligam*, I believe in order that I may know. Faith must always come first, and rational investigation must be subordinated to it. Abélard's enemies declared that, for all his protests and affirmations, his whole attention was given to reason, thus obscuring the necessity of faith and bringing discredit upon the divine mysteries of the church. Abélard, as a matter of fact, took particular delight in exposing the ignorance of the learned; he sneered at worthy schoolmasters and ridiculed many established beliefs. There has been endless controversy as to what were his exact teachings on the vexed subject of universals. Though he himself repudiated nominalism, it was alleged by some of his contemporaries that he merely offered the same doctrine in different words. And it was through his dialectical argument that, like Roscellinus, he came to be accused of undermining the Trinitarian creed. Abélard's death before his case could be retried at Rome left the matter in suspense, but it is now generally held that his views offered a sensible compromise between the extremes of nominalism and realism, which largely influenced the opinions of the later schoolmen.

However this may be, Abélard's chief title to fame lies rather in the challenge which he issued against the mental habits of his age—the stimulation of an intellectual curiosity that could be profitably turned in many directions. For that reason Abélard was one of the world's greatest teachers, and his little book, *Sic*

*Sic et Non*

*et Non*, one of the epoch-making works in history. The intention, he states in the prologue, is to compile a list of apparent contradictions to be found in the most authoritative writings of the church. Such a collection of problems, by encouraging keen minds to attempt their solution, should constitute a first step toward improved knowledge. In Holy Scripture, of course, there can be no real contradictions; the student must reconcile the discrepancies by rational interpretation. The same procedure can be profitably followed in connection with the fathers, except that their statements do not have to be accepted as necessarily true. The thoughtful investigator will compare and analyze such opinions, finally giving his support to that which is soundest. And since Abélard's selections are arranged as affirming or denying certain propositions, he has called his book *Sic et Non* (Yes and No).

In all, Abélard proposes 158 questions concerning faith and reason, the Persons of the Trinity, the angels, Adam and Eve, human nature, the origin of evil, sin, and the sacraments. So, for example, we find (1) whether or not faith is to be supported by reason; (9) whether or not God is a substance; (48) whether or not good angels and saints who enjoy the sight of God know all things; (58) whether or not Adam was saved; (88) whether or not, after the resurrection, Christ showed to doubting persons scars rather than wounds; (135) whether or not marriage is a good thing; (147) whether or not Cain was damned; (157) whether or not it is permitted to slay men. On each of these problems Abélard quoted appropriate extracts—from the Old and New Testaments, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Orosius, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, decrees of church councils, letters of the popes, and occasionally a later writer, like Bede or one of the Carolingian scholars. Although Abélard offered no reconciliation of these conflicting statements, we should not on that account suppose that he believed none to be possible. He was not a Voltaire, and there is no reason for regarding his book as other than he described it. If it tended to cast reproach on the authorities, that—as Abélard would say—was their fault, not his. The divergences of opinion existed; to hide the fact was to condone ignorance. How his challenge was taken up by his pupils and others will be seen in the following pages.

Meanwhile the increasing popularity of dialectic had met sharp denunciation from the more conservative ecclesiastics. The

spokesman of this group in the early twelfth century was the renowned Bernard of Clairvaux. The son of a Burgundian knight, Bernard in 1113 led a band of other well-born youths to the newly founded monastery of Cîteaux. There, only a few years earlier, an English abbot named Stephen Harding had reestablished literal observance of the Benedictine Rule, once more emphasizing manual labor as the essential feature of monastic discipline. The Cistercian reform, however, gained little headway until the appearance of Bernard. Then the community grew so rapidly that a number of daughter houses were founded—among them Clairvaux, of which Bernard became abbot in 1115. Thenceforward until his death in 1153 that zealous monk was one of the most prominent figures in Europe. His fame was reflected in the phenomenal growth of the Cistercian order, which by the time of Bernard's death had enrolled 343 abbeys—a number that was more than doubled by the end of the century.

St.  
Bernard  
(1090-  
1153)

This great religious revival was from the beginning intensely puritanical, and Bernard was its personification. With the fervor and moral grandeur of an Old Testament prophet, he fiercely denounced what he considered the evil tendencies of his day—especially the mounting wealth and luxury, the new fashion of erecting magnificent churches, and the preoccupation of the schools with dialectic. The conservative Bernard was horrified by the extravagance of contemporary ecclesiastical architecture—and this was the relatively plain Romanesque!<sup>11</sup> For him secular literature held no charms. Rational study he considered dangerous, if not positively sinful. Like the extreme mystics of the early Christian centuries, he held that truth might be attained through religious contemplation, but never through reason. So it was Bernard who led the prosecution of Abélard in 1141 and, seven years later, that of another famous scholastic, Gilbert de la Porrée, bishop of Poitiers and author of the most popular mediæval text on logic. Although Gilbert escaped condemnation, the fact that such a distinguished scholar and prelate could be so treated is eloquent testimony to Bernard's influence. Throughout his entire lifetime the abbot of Clairvaux acted as a sort of spiritual director for western Europe, advising popes and kings, preaching crusades, and arbitrating conflicts in both church and state.

Through his sermons, hymns, and books of devotion, as well as

<sup>11</sup> See below, pp. 470 f.

Hugh of  
St. Victor  
(1096-  
1141)

through the example of his saintly life, Bernard has never ceased to be a force in Christendom. Yet, in so far as he opposed the intellectual and æsthetic advance of the age, he fought a losing battle, for among the chief glories of the mediæval church must ever be ranked the cathedrals and the universities. Religious feeling, as was to be proved in the thirteenth century, was not stifled by the development either of Gothic art or of scholastic learning. On the contrary, it remained the dominant element in both fields—constituted, indeed, a force that brought them into harmonious union. This fact will be better appreciated when we come to examine contemporary standards of artistic expression. Here it need only be remarked that the most characteristic works of the thirteenth century were deeply tinged with mystic symbolism. This was a very ancient factor in Christian thought, having appeared very prominently in the writings of the church fathers.<sup>12</sup> Through allegorical interpretation, for example, the Old Testament had long been read as a foreshadowing of the New. And if symbolism could be used to reconcile Hebrew with Christian tradition, might it not be equally useful in connection with other apparent discrepancies between authorities?

This was the thesis presented by a second of Abélard's critics, Hugh of St. Victor. The meaning of words, said Hugh, can never be revealed by dialectical quibbling. We must look beyond the literal sense to discover the truth. So in the study of nature one who sees only minerals and vegetables and animals sees very little, for each of these objects has a transcendent value when considered as part of the divine plan. The true philosopher is he who, by the aid of revelation, can grasp the hidden significance of things—can perceive in the most ordinary phenomena the symmetry of God's universe. The danger in this line of thought is, of course, that by allegory the individual mystic can make anything mean anything else. To square with the teachings of an authoritative church, symbolic interpretation must, like reason, be subordinated to faith. The general validity of Hugh's argument, however, was unquestioned in the twelfth century and, being elaborated by other writers, had far-reaching influence on thirteenth-century scholasticism.

Meanwhile the craze for dialectical study had also brought sarcastic comment from an entirely different quarter—from those

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 169.

scholars who carried on the tradition of the earlier grammarians. Inevitably, as unprecedented numbers of eager youths entered upon the ancient *trivium*, some of them would be inspired, as Einhard had been, by enthusiasm for literature. All the Latin authors whom we know were then available, and at least the greatest of them had been continuously read and praised. Even to the ultra-conservative mind, a passion for Ciceronian prose would be no more sinful than one for Aristotelian logic. In the twelfth century the two most famous centers of classical study were Chartres and Orléans, but in many other places there were masters engaged in the interpretation of Cicero, Seneca, Vergil, Horace, Ovid, and less familiar authors. Although the influence of such writers can be traced in countless mediæval compositions, the primary interest of the scholar remained in the contemporary world. Having no sense of historical perspective, he used the classics as if they had been written to adorn his own age. This was true even of the remarkable free lance, John of Salisbury.

John of  
Salisbury  
(d. 1180)

From his native England John went in 1136 to France, where he studied for nearly a dozen years, chiefly at Paris and Chartres. His lively account of these schools, and of the great men whom he there encountered, is our most vivid source for the educational habits of the twelfth century. John heard all the great masters, including Abélard, but consistently refused to be the ardent pupil of any. He preferred to do his own reading and to make his own interpretations. To his mind, wisdom lay in a broad understanding of many subjects, rather than in narrow devotion to one. In particular he decried the exaggerated reputation of logic.<sup>18</sup>

Whereas dialectic furthers other studies, so if it remain by itself, it lies bloodless and barren; nor does it quicken the soul to yield fruit of philosophy, except the same conceive from elsewhere.

If John had had his way, advanced education would have been founded on a broader appreciation of literature; would have been more of a philosophical introduction to general culture, and less of a technical preparation for theologians. But there is no good in speculating how, in that case, the schools might have anticipated the humanism of a subsequent age. It was not the spirit

<sup>18</sup> This quotation is from R. L. Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning* (London, 1920), p. 186.



of John of Salisbury that guided the development of the thirteenth-century university; rather it was that of Abélard.

### 3. SCHOLASTICISM AND THE NEW SCIENCES

Scholastic  
theology

Taken in its most comprehensive sense, scholasticism may be said to have been the system of study and writing that characterized the mediæval university, and that system bears the unmistakable marks of Abélard's influence. He, of course, was not the first to compile a book of opinions, nor was he the inventor of a new dialectic. He cited only traditional authorities and employed the ancient logic of Aristotle. Yet the spirit of his instruction was new, for it emphasized the need of intensive study before men could begin to understand the phrases which they had been repeating for so many generations. The typical scholastic, it will be noted, made no historical criticism of the authorities themselves. Statements from them were assembled and evaluated as if they had been issued by living men, some of whom might be the immediate spokesmen of God, others merely eminent for pious learning. These statements were then analyzed, combined, and developed by logical argument—a process which, within prescribed limits, could be freely carried on for an indefinite period. Such debate could never go back of the accepted authorities; but in so far as they were sound, the results of the schoolman's dialectic would be sound.

Abélard, with a boldness that some of his contemporaries found decidedly shocking, had pointed out the inconsistencies that could be found in the most respected Christian writings. Some of his points, to be sure, were rather trivial; others—especially those regarding sin and salvation through the sacraments—were of prime significance to any one who intended to explain the essential teachings of the church. The challenge of Abélard's *Sic et Non* was one which could not be avoided. It was, as a matter of fact, taken up by one of his pupils, Peter Lombard, who became bishop of Paris in 1159. Some time before that he had composed a book of *Sententiæ* (Opinions), somewhat like that of Abélard, though less controversial in tone and provided with cautiously argued solutions. It was enormously successful, becoming a standard text at Paris and inspiring whole volumes of commentaries. So was launched the formal study known as theology, which was to constitute the focal point of university education. From Abélard to Peter Lombard was the

first step; the second was from Peter Lombard to Thomas Aquinas, of whose great work something will be seen below.

Theology, as thus made a subject for intensive study in the schools, was characterized by two outstanding features. It was deductive, being essentially the logical development of certain general principles taken from an authoritative source. And it was practical, in that it constituted the standard training for an ecclesiastical career. Both features reappeared in the study of law, which likewise made a splendid advance in the twelfth century. For a thousand years the church had been accumulating a mass of legal precedents in the form of rules extracted from the New Testament, papal decretals, acts of councils, decisions of courts, and opinions of learned men. But as yet nothing had been done with this material beyond the formation of incomplete collections. Now, about 1148, Gratian published the monumental work which became popularly known as the *Decretum*. Canon law

Of the author almost nothing is known except that he was an Italian monk who, like the future Pope Alexander III, was engaged in teaching at Bologna. His book obviously was the product of laborious study. From its official title, *Concordantia Discordantium Canonum* (A Concord of Discordant Canons), it may be seen that Gratian intended to do for canon law what Peter Lombard was then attempting for theology. The *Decretum*, indeed, is at once a code of laws and an exposition of their principles. It is divided into three parts, each of which is organized topically under problems, citing the pertinent canons and then proposing a logical solution of disputed points. Immediately accepted as the basic text for the use of all canonists, it in turn elicited a library of weighty commentaries and of supplementary collections. In less than a century five volumes of new decretals had appeared, which were made into one official condensation by Pope Gregory IX in 1234.<sup>14</sup> This, together with the *Decretum*, forms the first two portions of the compilation known as the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. Gratian's  
*Decretum*

The choice of a name reminiscent of Justinian's *Corpus Iuris Civilis*<sup>15</sup> was, of course, no accident, for the systematic study of canon law was from the outset directly influenced by that of the Roman law. The latter had never gone out of use in Italy. There official documents were regularly drawn up by notaries The  
revival  
of Roman  
juris-  
prudence

<sup>14</sup> See below, p. 531.

<sup>15</sup> See above, p. 121.

trained according to ancient precedent. Furthermore, as we have seen, some parts of the Theodosian Code had been reissued by various barbarian kings and so had long been enforced by many local courts. Neither of these facts, however, implied any continuous study of jurisprudence, which is an analytic subject concerned not so much with specific legislation as with the underlying principles of law. From the jurist's point of view, the all-important section of Justinian's *Corpus* was the *Digest*, and that seems to have been virtually unknown in the west until the latter half of the eleventh century. Then, being somehow rediscovered, it led to the revival of jurisprudence in the schools.

The beginnings of this development remain very obscure, but by the early twelfth century Bologna had become illustrious as a center for study of the Roman law. There, following the method of instruction first made famous by Irnerius, the greatest legal authorities of the age lectured on the *Digest*, explaining difficult points and illustrating them by citations of the *Code*. As ecclesiastical jurisprudence came into existence, the same system was applied to it. Nor was all this discussion a mere matter of academic curiosity. Contemporary princes and city-states offered many lucrative positions to trained lawyers. Like Frederick Barbarossa, the typical king of the subsequent period was surrounded by "civilians," while canonists tended to secure the most powerful offices in the church—often that of the papacy itself. The English kingdom was exceptional only in the fact that its lawyers were specialists in the peculiar common law of that country. As will be more fully seen in later chapters, the thirteenth century was a very legalistic age.

Far from being only a form of mental gymnastics, the dialectic of the twelfth century thus had an intimate connection with the highly practical subjects of theology and law. Long before they had been developed into systematic courses of instruction, a dozen other studies of absorbing interest were thrown open to the amazed eyes of western scholars. This sudden broadening of the intellectual horizon came about through the introduction of the Greek and Arabic sciences—assuredly one of the major events in the history of our civilization. Why was it that the Latin world first became acquainted with this material in the twelfth century? According to the explanation once given, it was the crusade that produced the change; on reexamination of the evidence, this idea has to be abandoned. The crusaders had no inter-

est in books and scholars. The roads by which Arabic learning was brought into the west ran not through Palestine, but through Spain and Sicily, where peaceful intercourse between Christian and Moslem was encouraged by the political stabilization of the twelfth century. Yet, before we jump to the conclusion that cessation of warfare was the dominant factor, we must remember certain other facts. Although Latins and Saracens had been chronically hostile for many centuries, Latins and Byzantines had not been. An Italian could learn Greek without leaving his own peninsula, and by merely crossing the Adriatic he could easily visit Constantinople, where knowledge of Hellenic antiquity was still ardently pursued. Even a considerable portion of the Latin classics had been all but forgotten in the western schools. The great lack must therefore have been intellectual curiosity, rather than opportunity for improvement.

Indeed, when a western scholar sought the famous works of the Greeks and the Arabs, he had no trouble in finding them. At the court of the Sicilian king, Roger II, there were at least two distinguished students of Greek: Henry Aristippus and Eugene the Emir. The former directly translated two dialogues of Plato and one book of Aristotle's *Meteorology*. The latter worked with both Greek and Arabic, and seems to have aided some unnamed scholar in translating a manuscript of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, which Aristippus had brought the king from Constantinople. In that city, too, various Italians—notably James of Venice and Burgundio of Pisa—were then producing Latin versions of a good many Greek books, among them lesser works of Aristotle, Galen, and Euclid, as well as a number of theological writings. The more influential translations, however, were made from the Arabic, and most of them were produced in Spain. In this enterprise a score of men came to be engaged by 1150, and within another hundred years virtually all the great texts of the Moslem schools had been made available for western use. Here only a few examples can be cited.

The trans-  
lators

The greatest Latin scientist of the early twelfth century was an Englishman, Adelard of Bath. Refusing to be satisfied, like his predecessors, merely with a knowledge of the abacus, he traveled through the Moslem countries, and there became well versed in Arabic mathematics. To him, apparently, is due the credit for first introducing to Christendom the arithmetic of

Adelard  
of Bath

al-Khwarizmi<sup>16</sup>—a name which westerners made into a title for the new science, *algorism*. Adelard also translated from the Arabic the same author's work on trigonometry, the classic geometry of Euclid, and a treatise on the astrolabe. And he wrote a number of books himself to explain scientific matters to his western audience. This was only the beginning of the tide. Following Adelard of Bath came the Jewish convert, John of Seville, and his Spanish partner, Gundisalvo; also Hermann of Carinthia, Robert of Chester, Rudolf of Bruges, Gerard of Cremona, and others whose names reveal their diverse origin.

Gerard of  
Cremona

Gerard of Cremona is typical. Attracted to Spain by a passion for Ptolemy's *Almagest*, he settled at Toledo and there devoted his life to the translation of scientific works from Arabic. Before he died in 1187, we are told that he and his collaborators had produced Latin versions of nearly a hundred books—including, among the Greeks, volumes by Ptolemy, Galen, Hippocrates, Euclid, Archimedes, Apollonius, and Aristotle; and among the Arabs, by al-Farabi, al-Kindi, al-Khwarizmi, Jabir, al-Farghani, al-Razi, and Ibn Sina (Avicenna).<sup>17</sup> By the second quarter of the thirteenth century the Latin west had been given all the major sciences of the Greeks and Arabs, together with much speculative philosophy and oriental mysticism. Alongside the Old Logic of Aristotle (the two essays known via Boëthius) had now appeared the New Logic (his four advanced works on logic). His *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and minor books on the natural sciences became known about the same time, and by 1275 all the rest of the Aristotelian writing had been put into Latin, as well as a mountain of Arabic commentary, notably that by Ibn Rushd (Averroës).

If, over against this formidable mass of erudition, we place the little volume of Isidore's *Etymologies*, we gain a rough indication of the intellectual advance made by western Europe between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. In assimilating the lore of the Moslem world Christian scholars now found a task that might well claim their best energies. It was not only that the bulk of the material was staggering; the mixture of Hellenic, Mohammedan, and oriental elements was such as to make reconciliation with ecclesiastical tradition extremely difficult. Yet it was precisely this sort of problem that delighted the eager fol-

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 208.

<sup>17</sup> See above, pp. 14 f., 208 f.

lowers of Abélard. With the introduction of the New Logic and all the new sciences, the possibility of a more literary standard of education quickly faded. For better or for worse, instruction in the great schools of the thirteenth century continued to be based on rationalism. In order to understand the results of this development, we must now turn to the organization of the universities.

#### 4. THE RISE OF THE UNIVERSITIES

The rapid expansion of advanced study traced in the preceding section naturally implied a huge increase in the numbers of teachers and pupils. Being attracted to certain great centers of instruction, they tended, like colonies of merchants or craftsmen, to become self-governing and eventually to gain legal recognition. A super-school of this kind is what we call a university, but the name was not generally adopted till long after the institution had actually emerged. The Latin *universitas* was originally a mere synonym for *communitas*,<sup>18</sup> a vague word applied to any group or association of people. All persons engaged in study at a particular place might be so addressed, or the term might be used to indicate separate societies of masters and students. In other words, the university was at first a gild, or perhaps a union of gilds. The oldest universities can be assigned no specific dates of origin; they gradually took form in the course of the twelfth century. A second group of universities arose through colonization—as when, for some reason, a group migrated from an established center to form a new one of their own. Finally, after the models had been perfected, it became usual for princes to found universities by formal charter.

The university as a gild

For a long time after the year 1100 no one could have predicted which of the many schools would come to dominate western education. By 1200, however, the issue was settled: the mother universities of Europe were to be Bologna and Paris. To understand the beginnings of these famous universities, we must forget almost all that the term now implies. In the twelfth century there were no university buildings or endowments, hardly even what we should recognize as an educational institution. There were, in fact, only gatherings of students and teachers, each—in the absence of all uniform discipline—doing just about what he pleased. At Bologna it was especially the masters in law who

The University of Bologna

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 360.

attracted the crowds of students, most of whom had already had preliminary training in the arts and had therefore reached a comparatively mature age. Instruction was quite haphazard, lacking even the rudimentary organization of a cathedral school. And there was no efficient royal government to take charge of it. Presumably the masters had long constituted some sort of gild in order to regulate their common affairs, particularly the qualifications demanded for admission to their own ranks. But our first clear evidence of corporate action comes rather from the side of the students.

The initiative in this direction seems to have been taken toward the close of the twelfth century by men who had thronged to Bologna from the surrounding countries, and who felt that they were being despoiled by the townsfolk. Law students from certain regions united to form what they called nations, and these combined to force advantageous concessions. Unless the citizens of Bologna would guarantee rooms and commodities at fair rates, the students declared that they would move to another city—and the masters, being entirely dependent on fees, would have to go along. As the students won the victory, they became permanently organized in two universities: the cismontane, including men from Italy, and the transmontane, including men from outside it. These two universities, however, always acted together through two groups of deputies, each headed by a rector, and so came to be thought of as one. Having humbled the municipal authorities, the combination then proceeded, by threat of boycott, to enforce a series of statutes governing all phases of instruction. Each master had to give a certain number of lectures, covering a certain minimum of work in a certain way, being careful to explain all difficult passages in the text. He had to begin on time and quit on time. He could not leave town without permission. Even on the occasion of his wedding he was allowed only one day off. His conduct was supervised by student inspectors, and if he violated any regulation he was fined. Earnest lads, these jurists of Bologna!

Under this system, then, the university was actually a union of student gilds, which gained control of all academic matters save only what we should call graduation. The bestowing of degrees remained the prerogative of the masters' gilds, or colleges, as they were styled at Bologna. At Paris, on the other hand, contemporary development produced a diametrically oppo-

site result. There from the outset the great mass of the students came for instruction in arts and so, on the average, were mere boys, who would naturally be held responsible to the men under whom they studied. The masters, in fact, might well be pushed in that direction by two other authorities which always had to be reckoned with in the French capital: the king and the bishop. Politically, Paris was thoroughly subordinated to the royal administration. When a commune of bourgeois had never been set up, it was unlikely that one of students would be tolerated. And the cathedral clergy never forgot that the original school of Paris was theirs.

Nevertheless, the cathedral school was not the only one which had attracted students to Paris. In the days of Abélard, the Faculties  
 abbeyes of Saint-Victor and Sainte-Geneviève each had its nucleus of masters. And with the sensational advance of dialectic and allied subjects, the cloisters of Notre-Dame could not accommodate a tithe of the learners who flocked to the island in the river. Long before 1200 the academic population had preempted, first, one of the bridges leading to the left bank—the famous Petit-Pont—and then the left bank itself, which thenceforward—from the scholarly language there spoken—became known as the Latin Quarter. Under such circumstances, the power of the chancellor, who had controlled the old cathedral school, was inevitably superseded by that of a masters' gild. There came to be, in fact, four such associations: the faculties of arts, theology, law, and medicine. Among them the supremacy was eventually, through force of numbers, won by the faculty of arts, the rector of which became the recognized superior of the three deans elected by the other faculties, and so the head of the entire organization. This process, however, was not completed till the fourteenth century; by origin the university was really a cooperative union of gilds, as at Bologna.

At Paris, too, we find nations, but here the teachers controlled the units, so that a student was not a full-fledged member until he had obtained his master's degree. In the meantime he was supposed to be subject to the authority of his instructors, who, as clergy, claimed for themselves and their pupils immunity from the ordinary civil courts. Legal  
immunity  
 The students were a very turbulent lot and from time to time indulged in free-for-all fights with the bourgeois and with the villeins of the neighboring monasteries. One of these affairs occurred in 1200, and when the royal *prévôt*



and his police intervened, they were clumsy enough to kill some high-born German students. In protest, all the professors suspended their classes and threatened to leave the city unless the king gave immediate redress. Philip Augustus acted promptly to avert such a calamity, throwing the *prévôt* and his men into jail and issuing the document which is celebrated as the foundation charter of the university. Actually, he merely confirmed the exemption of his *scolares* at Paris from all but ecclesiastical jurisdiction and specified the procedure that was to be followed in case of unfortunate disturbances in the future.

Papal regulation

About the same time Innocent III, who had himself studied at Paris, became interested in further defining the rights and obligations of those who were undertaking to become theologians. So it was his legate, Robert de Courçon, who in 1215 gave the university its first set of general regulations. To become a master of arts, a student must be twenty years of age and have completed six years of academic work; but to teach theology, he must be thirty-five and have spent ten additional years in that subject. The master should maintain a decent exterior and should in particular wear a clerical gown of dark color reaching to his heels. He should not begin to teach at all unless willing to continue the profession for at least two years. There are to be no students-at-large; each must attach himself to a master, who shall be responsible for him and have the right to discipline him if necessary. Students and masters may form associations to defend their rights or to aid one another in charitable enterprises.

Degrees

From these statutes it may be seen that originally the academic degree was essentially a license to teach, and it made no difference whether the licentiate was styled master, doctor, or professor. So we still employ the letters A.M. (*Artium Magister*), M.D. (*Medicinæ Doctor*), S.T.P. (*Sanctæ Theologiæ Professor*), and others of the same sort. The baccalaureate, or rank of bachelor, was at the outset only a preliminary grade, considered of no value in itself. Having passed the required examinations and successfully defended a thesis by way of demonstrating his ability, the candidate was formally admitted to the society of masters by the bestowal of the *biretta*, the teacher's square cap. This was his inception or commencement—his entrance upon his chosen profession. Thenceforward he was technically a brother of the gild and could offer instruction to all comers. At first there was

no other prerequisite for membership in the faculty; later, as endowed chairs were set up by wealthy patrons, there came the distinction between holding a degree and holding a job which is so unhappily prominent in the modern world. By the opening of the thirteenth century some scholars were already sighing for the good old times, before education had become entangled in so much red tape!

As far as regulation of students was concerned, our evidence tends to show that university statutes were easier to pass than to enforce. The students of the Middle Ages gained a reputation for being a roistering, irreverent lot. The scholar who wastes his father's money in riotous living, and who shows disrespect for God and man, is a favorite text in mediæval sermons. The clerk who appears as the hero of so many thirteenth-century tales is a model neither of virtue nor of piety.<sup>19</sup> And the verdict of the preachers and story-tellers is to a large degree borne out by the writings of the students themselves.<sup>20</sup> Judicial records all too often report murderous affrays in which students were involved, and not always as innocent victims. Especially disturbing in university communities were the fights between town and gown, which frequently had fatal consequences for some of the participants. As today, however, the wilder elements in academic society tended always to be the more prominent. It is likely that, judged by the standards of his time, the average student then was as law-abiding and conscientious as now.

Student  
life

A rich variety of detailed information concerning student life comes to us from the thirteenth and later centuries. Many writings, official and otherwise, give vivid glimpses of disputations in the classroom, of dinners held to celebrate graduation, of hazing administered to the unfortunate freshman or, as he was then called, the yellow-beak (*bejaunus*, *bec jaune*). Manuals for the use of students provide Latin words and phrases for everything that could be thought of, and incidentally illustrate daily habits in the university community. Even more remarkable are the letters exchanged by students and their parents. For such correspondence, as for most other kinds, models were kept by the professional letter-writers of the day. Well adorned with rhetorical flourishes and appropriate quotations from the Bible or a classical author, they served very practical purposes. Almost

<sup>19</sup> See below, p. 465.

<sup>20</sup> See below, pp. 447 f.

invariably the student asked for money and was chiefly interested in a good excuse for being short of cash. Sometimes the father replied promptly and generously. More often he took occasion to deliver a lecture on the evils of sloth and extravagance. Doubtless there were hosts of youths who always did as they should, but from such the business of letter-writing made no profit.

Origins  
of the  
collegiate  
system

Among those who sought an education there were at all times hundreds of boys from poverty-stricken homes. The church offered the baseborn the surest means of advancement, and it is greatly to the credit of the mediæval university that it recognized scholarship without regard to social distinction. Many a peasant's son rose to fame as a master and author. Yet, at the beginning of his career, the poor boy found life desperately hard. He was left to look out for himself as best he could. In the early days, when there were no university buildings, classes were held in any available rooms, often enough in a tavern. Having paid the instructor's fees, the student attended lectures, sitting in the straw and taking notes on wax tablets. Only the well-to-do could afford to own the text that was being studied, and there were no libraries for general use. A greater trouble was the matter of lodgings. Masters usually had their own halls. Students lived wherever and however they could. The richest maintained separate establishments; the rank and file clubbed together in cooperative houses; the poorest starved in garrets and cellars.

To remedy the situation, benevolent patrons from an early time began to provide quarters where the needy could dwell free of charge. But the first great improvement came with the foundation of the mendicant orders.<sup>21</sup> Though pledged to absolute poverty, the Dominican or Franciscan in a university found at his disposal a comfortable building provided with heat, light, food, drink, and even a library. Youths who did not want to be friars were placed at a tremendous disadvantage. So, about 1258, Robert de-Sorbon endowed a hall at Paris for sixteen persons of this sort who desired to continue work for the doctorate in theology. This was a great event in the history of European culture, for it marked the beginning of the famous Sorbonne,<sup>22</sup> the oldest of academic colleges. Similar establishments soon came

<sup>21</sup> See below, pp. 513 f.

<sup>22</sup> Thanks to further endowments, the college grew very rapidly, coming eventually to house the whole theological faculty. So that faculty itself came generally to be known as the Sorbonne.

to house the bulk of the university population, both masters and students, and eventually they became centers of instruction as well as residences. From Paris the collegiate system spread far and wide, attaining great popularity especially in England.

As already remarked, the model universities for Europe were Paris and Bologna. Both developed much the same method of teaching and came to grant much the same degrees. But they continued to emphasize different studies. At Bologna jurisprudence always dominated and very little attention was given to arts or theology. For those subjects the student went by preference to Paris, where canon law was of secondary importance and civil law was not taught at all. During the thirteenth century leadership in medical study passed from Salerno to newer universities, such as Padua, formed in 1222 as an offshoot of Bologna; Naples, founded outright by Frederick II in 1224;<sup>23</sup> and Montpellier, where famous schools had already existed for well over a hundred years. About the same time a distinguished university emerged also at Orléans, and it quickly became the foremost center of legal instruction outside Italy. Oxford University seems to have originated toward the close of the twelfth century through the settlement of certain masters who had earlier been at Paris. Cambridge, the second English university, began through a migration from Oxford in the thirteenth century. The first Spanish university to be permanently successful was established at Salamanca by the king of León about 1220. Germany had no university until the fourteenth century, when such institutions were set up at Prague, Vienna, Erfurt, Heidelberg, and Cologne. By that time universities had been founded also in Angers, Toulouse, Pavia, Florence, Lisbon, Cracow, Buda, and a score of other places. Throughout Italy the standard was always the University of Bologna, the influence of which was strong also in Spain and southern France. The rest of Europe looked to Paris for its academic patterns. Indeed, the whole Latin world regarded the university on the Seine as the peerless leader of instruction in the arts and in theology—one subject the foundation of all learning, the other the crowning glory of Christian wisdom. To escape the intellectual domination of Paris, the mediæval scholar had to find a home among Greeks or Moslems.

The influence of Paris and Bologna

Despite all national and political variations, one uniform sys-

<sup>23</sup> See below, p. 538.

The  
curriculum

tem of teaching was in vogue from Poland and Hungary to the British Isles, from Sicily and Portugal to the Scandinavian kingdoms. The basis of the system was still the liberal arts; but alongside the texts of the Dark Age were now the New Logic, the other works of Aristotle, and all the sciences recently translated from the Greek and Arabic. The arts course was supposed to occupy six years; then the "artist" was permitted to advance to the study of theology, law, or medicine. In theology he would use as texts the Bible and Peter Lombard's *Sentences*; in civil law Justinian's *Digest*; in canon law Gratian's *Decretum* and its supplements; in medicine Hippocrates and Galen, together with the Arabic authors known as Avicenna and Rhazes. In all these subjects dialectic remained the fundamental study, for even in the sciences emphasis was placed on the criticism of books, rather than on direct observation of nature. As yet scholars could do little more than follow the Arabs in arithmetic and algebra, Euclid in geometry, Ptolemy in trigonometry and astronomy, Aristotle in physics and other natural sciences, Galen and his Arabic commentators in physiology and anatomy.

The scholastic education of the thirteenth century thus tended to neglect, on the one hand, literary study and, on the other, experimental science. Each of these causes had its champions, but temporarily their protests were unheeded in the great centers of learning. The consequence for the cultural development of Europe will be better appreciated in a later connection.

## CHAPTER XIX

### DEVELOPMENTS IN LITERATURE

#### I. MEDIÆVAL LATIN

A PREVALENT notion concerning the Middle Ages is that the Latin then used was bad Latin. What should be said is that mediæval Latin was not classical—which is by no means the same as calling it bad. When the universities arose, Latin had been a living language of the educated for over a thousand years since the days of Augustus. How could it live and remain the same during that entire period? A man of the twelfth century could no more express himself in Ciceronian Latin than we can describe our motorized civilization in Shakespearean English—and Shakespeare wrote only a little more than three hundred years ago. The prohibition of all but classical Latin in the mediæval schools would have been equivalent to the prohibition of the language altogether. As a matter of fact, that is what subsequently took place when the humanists came to dictate educational standards.<sup>1</sup> Then, after gentlemen had learned to scorn all but antique Latin, every writer on subjects of contemporary interest was driven into the vernacular. Since then Latin has been a dead language, and the scholarly world has suffered from a growing confusion of tongues.

Vitality  
and prac-  
ticality

In the Middle Ages the learned man was not worried by antiquarian standards of linguistic propriety. If he needed a new word to denote a new concept, he coined one. So the writer on theology, canon law, mathematics, alchemy, or national institutions employed a technical vocabulary—sprinkled, to be sure, with barbarisms, but intelligible. The writs and charters of a king like Henry II, though filled with expressions that horrify the classicist, are models of clarity and precision. If, for instance, he wished to free a certain community from all gelds and tallages, from murder fine, and from suit to hundred and shire courts, his clerk wrote *de omnibus geldis et tallagiis, de murdro, et de sectis hundredorum et scirarum*. There was no other way of making the necessary definitions. The worst Latin of the

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 711 f.

Middle Ages, in fact, was that of the pretentious chronicler. Thinking it beneath him to employ common expressions, he loaded his pages with rhetorical bombast that served merely to obscure his meaning. In other words, mediæval Latin was best when it was simplest and most practical; when, as every living language must, it continued to meet the demands of a changing environment.

Gram-  
matical  
correctness

Nor should it be supposed that mediæval Latin was necessarily ungrammatical. There were, of course, at all times persons who could not write correctly, just as at present there are many whose English composition is not above reproach. In the Dark Age, the average Latin of royal chanceries became very bad, but that was no longer true in the twelfth century. Every reputable scribe then knew better than to put a plural verb with a singular subject, a masculine adjective to modify a feminine noun, or an ablative case after the preposition *ad*. He would not be likely to slip even on the proper use of the subjunctive. And if his constructions were sometimes unclassical, they were not on that account inferior. For example, every student who has toiled through Cæsar's *Commentaries* will remember that indirect discourse was once expressed by the infinitive with subject accusative. The mediæval scholar used *quod* and a dependent clause—precisely the same construction that is found in modern English or French. *Dixit quod exercitus pugnare nolebat*: He said that the army did not want to fight. The only objection that can be made to this sentence is that Cicero would have said it in another way.

Varieties  
of medi-  
æval Latin  
writing

To sketch the development of Latin literature in the age of the crusades would of course be a formidable undertaking, and one that would entail much quotation from the original. In the present connection, where it is intended merely to introduce the subject of vernacular literature, a few generalizations must suffice. Throughout the Christian countries of western Europe, Latin remained the universal language of the church, and so, virtually, of education and government. Any book or record that was composed for a learned audience was put into Latin. It was not until the thirteenth century that certain types of official documents came to be normally written in the vernacular, and this loss was more than balanced by the increase of scholarly production in the universities. Needless to say, the resultant mass of writing was enormous. Yet it can be readily classified. The great majority of such compositions were essentially practical. This

was obviously true of all governmental records, of all technical essays on law and administration, and of many books connected with the service and discipline of the church. And very nearly the total output of the schools was dominated by professional interest.

Caring little for literary study, the average schoolman had no thought of imitating the classics. He was not inspired to be an orator, a poet, a dramatist, a philosopher, or an imaginative essayist after the antique manner. His only interest in history was to draw from past ages illustrations that might serve as lessons for the present, and in this connection he preferred a late Roman epitome to great authors like Cæsar, Livy, and Tacitus. Under such circumstances, he could not be expected to write much history himself. That task, in fact, was generally left to local chroniclers and annalists. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries their productions were far superior to those of the previous age, but the best of them can hardly be trusted for events lying beyond their own time. The usual procedure of the more ambitious writer was to copy out of earlier compilations an account of world history from the Creation down to a recent period, and then to add something of his own at the end. The typical historian of the Middle Ages was therefore little more than a writer of memoirs. It is for this reason that the modern scholar prizes the works of such men as Robert of Torigny, Otto of Freising, and Matthew Paris.

Although the credulity of the mediæval chronicler should not be exaggerated, it must be admitted that, all too often, his chief motive was to spin a pleasing or edifying tale. The Middle Ages had an insatiable appetite for story-telling. Great tomes were filled with selections from the writers of antiquity; with lives of the saints and miracles of the Virgin; with fables about animals, bits of folklore, anecdotes from real life, heroic legends, courtiers' trifles, and the like. This material served to illustrate countless sermons and to adorn the pages of many a book on Christian morals. But few today would read either the homilies or the chronicles for the sake of æsthetic pleasure. As historical sources they may be invaluable; as literature they fail to charm the modern generation. The greatest Latin of the Middle Ages is rather to be found in the liturgy of the church—a rhythmic prose solemnly chanted to the accompaniment of gorgeous ceremonial. This same majestic quality pervades much of the official writing

Rhythmic  
prose



by great ecclesiastics. A formal document issuing from the papal chancery has a sonorous timbre that to the trained ear is very characteristic.

Rhymed  
verse

The Middle Ages also produced an enormous quantity of religious poetry, much of it distinctly mediocre. In Latin, as in Greek,<sup>2</sup> the changing pronunciation of the post-classical period tended to preclude the writing of verse based on quantity; and the new fashion of rhyme, when not subordinated to other elements, could make a jingle of the most solemn composition. Too many of the ecclesiastical songs, if unaccompanied by music, have an unhappy way of sounding like "Twinkle, twinkle, little star":

Mica, mica, parva stella;  
Miror quænam sis tam bella.

To be appreciated, they must be sung. Whatever may be thought of their form, however, there can be no question of their sincerity—the prerequisite of any great art.

O Roma nobilis, orbis et domina,  
Cunctarum urbium excellentissima,  
Roseo martyrum sanguine rubea,  
Albis et virginum liliis candida,  
Salutem dicimus tibi per omnia,  
Te benedicimus: salve per secula.

Merely to read the Latin of this eleventh-century poem is to catch its unforgettable resonance. Yet it should be heard as a pilgrims' chorus, chanted by lusty voices while persistent feet thudded along some road leading to the center of Christendom.

By the twelfth century there were plenty of men able to make passable imitations of classic verse, but such productions, though correct in quantity and meter, could reveal at best only an affected elegance. Study of antique models could no more make a poet in the Middle Ages than it can today. Then as now, poetry, to deserve the name, had to be vibrant with life. Throbbing with religious emotion, the great Latin hymns of the church must always be ranked among the literary monuments of the world. It would be a mistake, however, to think they alone among mediæval poems deserve such an honor. Strangely enough, the period which is commonly held to mark the height of ecclesiasti-

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 123.

cal influence in Europe witnessed a marvelous flowering of secular poetry, partly in the vernacular and partly in Latin. Neither of these literary developments can be understood without taking the other into consideration. Like the preacher on addressing different audiences, the author might be led to compose verses first in the language of the schools, and then in that of the people. We may even suspect that the same man would often produce songs both sacred and profane.

Abélard was a hymn-writer as well as a dialectician, and he tells us himself that his poems in praise of Héloïse were widely sung in France. He had two special gifts, she said, to captivate any woman: composing and singing. He could write either in the classic meters or in the modern rhythms. And his verse was so lovely, his music so sweet, that the name of Abélard—and, we may add, of Héloïse—was known everywhere, even among the illiterate. How many volumes of scholastic lore would we not gladly exchange for one of those lyrics? None, unfortunately, has come down to us; yet from the works of his contemporaries we may at least guess their nature. Abélard, it should be remembered, was long “an emulator of the Peripatetics.” It was wandering scholars such as he rubbed elbows with—poor students, clerks without preferment, talented wastrels, and occasionally a rogue living by his wits—who gave us the priceless literature known as Goliardic verse.<sup>3</sup>

Secular  
poetry

To those who have considered the world of the Middle Ages one vast monastery it comes as a shock to discover a mass of twelfth-century poetry, fresh, virile, blithe, and utterly sensuous. Was its frank paganism a reflection of classical study? Some features—notably the references to mythology—were undoubtedly so. But its ruling spirit would seem to be rather the universal paganism of youth, which needs no instruction from antiquity to learn that the sky is very blue, that the grass is very green, that springing flowers and running brooks and lilting bird-songs are very gay, and that wine and love are both intoxicating. Later one might be an erudite professor, or even a solemn bishop; in the meantime one was young and unfettered by convention, and with enough education to warrant at least the expression of life's elemental joys.

<sup>3</sup> The wandering scholars called themselves Goliardi, sons of Goliath—that is to say, Philistines.

Many of these student lyrics are nothing more than frivolous jingles, like the famous begging song, which begins:<sup>4</sup>

Goliardic  
verse

I, a wandering scholar lad,  
Born for toil and sadness,  
Oftentimes am driven by  
Poverty to madness.

Literature and knowledge I  
Fain would still be earning,  
Were it not that want of pelf  
Makes me cease from learning.

These torn clothes that cover me  
Are too thin and rotten;  
Oft I have to suffer cold,  
By the warmth forgotten.

Scarce I can attend at church,  
Sing God's praises duly;  
Mass and vespers both I miss,  
Though I love them truly.

Oh, thou pride of (Normandy),<sup>5</sup>  
By thy worth I pray thee,  
Give the suppliant help in need;  
Heaven will sure repay thee.

The same theme, when touched by genius, could be developed into very great poetry. The Archpoet, a noble-born starveling patronized by high ecclesiastics under Frederick Barbarossa, will always live for us in his *Confession of Goliath*.<sup>6</sup>

The Arch-  
poet's  
*Confession*

Seething ever inwardly,  
With fierce indignation,  
In my bitterness of soul,  
Hear my declaration.  
I am of one element,  
Levity my matter,  
Like enough a withered leaf  
For the winds to scatter. . . .

<sup>4</sup> Translation by J. A. Symonds, *Wine, Women, and Song*.

<sup>5</sup> Left blank in the manuscript, so that the singer could insert any appropriate name.

<sup>6</sup> Translation by Helen J. Waddell, *Medieval Latin Lyrics* (Constable & Co., Ltd.: London, 1929), pp. 171 f. This selection and those following are used by the permission of the publishers.

Never yet could I endure  
Soberness and sadness ;  
Jests I love and sweeter than  
Honey I find gladness.  
Whatsoever Venus bids  
Is a joy excelling ;  
Never in an evil heart  
Did she make her dwelling.

Down the broad way do I go,  
Young and unregretting ;  
Wrap me in my vices up,  
Virtue all forgetting. . . .

Yet a second charge they bring :  
I'm forever gaming.  
Yea, the dice have many a time  
Stripped me to my shaming. . . .

Look again upon your list.  
Is the tavern on it ?  
Yea, and never have I scorned,  
Never shall I scorn it.  
Till the holy angels come,  
And my eyes discern them,  
Singing for the dying soul  
*Requiem eternam.*

For on this my heart is set :  
When the hour is nigh me,  
Let me in the tavern die,  
With a tankard by me ;  
While the angels, looking down,  
Joyously sing o'er me,  
*Deus sit propitius*  
*Huic potatori.*

This is very nearly François Villon in the twelfth century—a gay jesting with dishonor and death.

Scores of ditties celebrate the joys of love and springtime, with constant and rather affected reference to Venus and Cupid, nymphs and dryads, Pan and Bacchus. Then, occasionally, some

Lyrics of  
love and  
nature

anonymous author strikes an unconventional note, and the result is a work of sheer grace and beauty.<sup>7</sup>

Down from the branches fall the leaves,  
A wanness comes on all the trees,  
The summer's done;  
And into his last house in heaven  
Now goes the sun.

Sharp frost destroys the tender sprays,  
Birds are a-cold in these short days.  
The nightingale  
Is grieving that the fire of heaven  
Is now grown pale.

The swollen river rushes on  
Past meadows whence the green has gone,  
The golden sun  
Has fled our world. Snow falls by day,  
The nights are numb.

About me all the world is stark  
And I am burning; in my heart  
There is a fire,  
A living flame in me, the maid  
Of my desire.

One of the loveliest is called by its first line, *Dum Diane vitrea* :

When Diana lighteth  
Late her crystal lamp,  
Her pale glory kindleth  
From her brother's fire,  
Little straying west winds  
Wander over heaven,  
Moonlight falleth,  
And recalleth,  
With a sound of lute-strings shaken,  
Hearts that have denied his reign  
To love again.  
Hesperus, the evening star,  
To all things that mortal are,  
Grants the dew of sleep. . . .

<sup>7</sup> Helen J. Waddell, *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, pp. 265, 275.

Sleep through the wearied brain  
 Breathes a soft wind  
 From fields of ripening grain,  
 The sound  
 Of running water over clearest sand,  
 A millwheel turning, turning slowly round,  
 These steal the light  
 From eyes weary of sight.

Lyrics such as these spread all over Europe and are found, interspersed among hymns of devotion, in manuscripts of many countries. There also stand parody and satire: a mock creed, which becomes a profession of sin, and even a toppers' mass, a burlesqued service of the eucharist. The *Gospel according to Marks of Silver* is a bitter parable of a poor man who seeks charity at the papal court, but is told:

Satiric  
 composi-  
 tions

"Friend, thy poverty perish with thee! Get thee behind me, Satan, because thou knowest not the wisdom of cash. Amen and amen! I say unto thee, thou shalt not enter into the joy of thy Lord until thou hast given the uttermost farthing."

Even after he has sold his clothes, he cannot gain admittance, and is cast into outer darkness. Then comes to Rome a certain clerk guilty of homicide, but rich. He tips the usher and the chamberlain and the cardinals.

Then the lord pope, hearing that his cardinals and ministers had received many gifts from the clerk, fell sick, even unto death. But the rich man sent him an elixir of gold and silver, and straightway he was healed. Then the lord pope called unto him his cardinals and ministers and said unto them: "Brethren, beware lest ye be seduced by vain words. For lo! I give unto you an example, that even as I grab, so also shall ye grab."

These excerpts will at least show how dangerous it is to generalize about the "mediæval mind." As soon as we look beyond certain conventional writings, there is no uniformity of sentiment. That all thinking persons of the twelfth century were struck from the same mold is one of many legends invented by imaginative historians. This truth will be even more apparent when we turn to vernacular literature.

## 2. THE TROUBADOURS AND COURTLY LOVE

In an earlier chapter we saw something of a typical feudal epic, the *Song of Roland*. At one time it was the general belief

Epic and  
lyric

that such *chansons de geste* were gradual accretions, which in the course of many centuries had grown up about cores of historical fact. Now, on the other hand, it is beginning to be realized that no work of art could ever have been formed in this way; that the great heroic poems of the twelfth century were composed, like the *Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost*, by individual authors. Thus understood, the *chansons de geste* become much more intelligible, for they can be interpreted as true products of the feudal age, owing to more primitive times virtually nothing except a few traditional names. This form of literature originated in northern France and from there spread throughout all the countries visited by French knights. The vogue lasted for many generations, in the course of which over a hundred of these *chansons* came to be written. As one piece gained renown, its characters were made to appear in many sequels. Thus arose the cycles of poems about Charlemagne's court and the legendary dynasties of Lorraine, Cambrai, Roussillon, Orange, and the like.

By the close of the twelfth century the *chansons de geste* sometimes came to include new elements, but in general they remained true to the epic tradition—the impersonal narration of heroic deeds, with the entire subordination of all love interest. Lyric, on the contrary, is dominated by the author's individual emotion, which is nearly always of feminine inspiration. In all ages the typical lyric has been the love song, and that is best when it is most spontaneous. Great epic is long, sonorous, and dramatic—a majestic recital suited to a monotonous, rhythmic chanting. Great lyric is brief, simple, and passionate—a little song that can be sung to a lilting tune. As may be seen from the examples quoted above, the Goliardi produced some exquisite lyrics in their rhymed Latin, but during the twelfth century it became evident that in this field of composition supremacy was to lie rather with the vernacular. Even then the standards of modern lyric poetry were being set by the southern French troubadours.<sup>8</sup>

The *chansons de geste* were sung by *jongleurs*,<sup>9</sup> wandering minstrels, who also acted as popular entertainers at fairs and markets, being commonly skilled as actors, dancers, acrobats, and sleight-of-hand performers. In general the *jongleurs* were men of low birth, but the troubadours were usually gentlemen—nobles

William  
IX of  
Aquitaine  
(1071-  
1127)

<sup>8</sup> Literally finders, that is to say, composers. In the northern dialect the word is *trouvères*.

<sup>9</sup> Literally jugglers.

who prized their skill in poetry and music as highly as a knightly reputation. So the first known troubadour was none other than William IX, duke of Aquitaine, grandfather of the famous Eleanor. From his pen we have eleven lyrics, varying from delicate songs of love and spring to compositions of very fleshly character. But the fact that his verse was sometimes libertine did not prevent his having sincere religious convictions, as is shown by his famous song on departing for the Holy Land.<sup>10</sup>

Since now I have a mind to sing,  
I'll make a song of that which saddens me,  
That no more in Poitou or Limousin  
Shall I love's servant be.

While he is away, what will happen to his fair *seigneurie* of Poitiers, and to his son, who is young and weak? He prays his neighbors to forgive him for any wrongs which he may have done them, and he offers the same prayer to Jesus, "both in Romance and in Latin."

Of prowess and of joy I had my part,  
But now of them my heart hath ta'en surcease.  
And now I go away to find that One  
Beside whom every sinner findeth peace.  
All that which I have loved I leave behind,  
The pride and all the pomp of chivalry.  
Since it so pleases God, I am resigned;  
I pray Him have me of His company.

There was, however, no necessity that a troubadour should be of aristocratic birth, as is proved by the careers of Marcabrun, a foundling, and of Bernard de Ventadour, the son of a servant in the local castle. Bernard, according to legend, long enjoyed the favor of the viscount, but was finally driven from Ventadour because he had a fatal attraction for the viscountess. At any rate, he left his native land to serve, first, the English queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and later the count of Toulouse. Of his poems, which were very famous throughout Europe, at least forty-five have survived. They are virtually all love songs, celebrating with remarkable delicacy and grace a number of ladies—each of them disguised by a pet name, so that we have no idea who they really

Bernard  
de Venta  
dour

<sup>10</sup> Helen J. Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (Constable & Co., Ltd.: London, 1927), p. 116. This and the selection below are used by permission of the publishers.



were. To show the simplicity of his verse, one stanza may be quoted in the original:

Quan la douss' aura venta  
 Deves vostre pais,  
 Vejaire m'es qu'eu senta  
 Un ven de paradis,  
 Per amor de la genta  
 Vas cui eu sui aclis,  
 En cui ai mes m'ententa,  
 E mon coratge assis;  
 Quar de totas partis  
 Per leis, tan m'atalenta.

A fairly literal translation, preserving the meter if not the rhyme, runs as follows:

When blow the gentle breezes  
 From out your countryside,  
 They breathe upon my senses  
 As winds from paradise;  
 Through love of the fair lady  
 Towards whom I fondly lean,  
 On whom my thoughts are centered,  
 For whom my passions burn:  
 To her I pledge myself  
 Alone, so she has charmed me.

Jaufré  
 Rudel

The true beauty of the Provençal lyric, however, can be more fully appreciated from a free translation, such as Helen Waddell's exquisite version of Jaufré Rudel.<sup>11</sup> Of the poet almost nothing is known, except that he was a baron of Limousin who went on the Second Crusade. And before he left, he wrote this enigmatic poem, celebrating a dream lady in a far-off land, whom his heart longed for, but whom his reason told him he should never meet.

When the days lengthen in the month of May,  
 Well pleased am I to hear the birds  
 Sing far away.  
 And when from that place I am gone,  
 I hang my head and make dull moan,  
 Since she my heart is set upon  
 Is far away.

<sup>11</sup> Helen J. Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, p. 205.

So far, that song of birds, flower o' the thorn,  
 Please me no more than winter morn,  
     With ice and sleet.  
 Ah, would I were a pilgrim over sea,  
 With staff and scrip and cloak to cover me,  
 That some day I might kneel me on one knee  
     Before her feet.

Most sad, most joyous shall I go away,  
 Let me have seen her for a single day,  
     My love afar.  
 I shall not see her, for her land and mine  
 Are sundered, and their ways are hard to find,  
 So many ways, and I shall lose my way,  
     So wills it God.

Yet I shall know no other love but hers,  
 And if not hers, no other love at all.  
     She hath surpassed all.  
 So fair is she, so noble, I would be  
 A captive with the hosts of paynimrie  
 In a far land, if so be upon me  
     Her eyes might fall.

God, who hath made all things in earth that are,  
 That made my love, and set her thus afar,  
     Grant me this grace,  
 That I may some day come within a room,  
 Or in some garden gloom  
     Look on her face.

It will not be, for at my birth they said  
 That one had set this doom upon my head,  
     —God curse him among men!—  
 That I should love, and not till I be dead,  
     Be loved again.

Altogether, poems are extant from some four hundred troubadours of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and we know the names of many others whose works have perished. No attempt can here be made to discuss this mass of literature, except by way of setting down a few conclusions as to its general nature and influence. The original language of the vernacular lyric, though called Provençal, was actually the dialect of Limousin,

Origins  
 of the  
 vernacular  
 lyric

and the fact that it was not the native tongue of William IX shows that conventional standards for this kind of composition had already been established before his day. Since the art could not have been perfected all at once, the problem of its origin has occasioned much speculation. Some have thought that it was a gradual development out of folk poetry, but the total absence of direct evidence renders this explanation dubious in the extreme. The influence of classic literature on the Goliardic verse is obvious. The Goliardi, however, were students in the schools, and most of their work dates from a period subsequent to the appearance of the Provençal lyric. Can we imagine the gentlemen of southern France in the eleventh century obtaining their inspiration from a study of Vergil and Ovid, or from those who had been thus inspired? Their works, certainly, reveal slight if any knowledge of the classic poets.

Recently the once discredited thesis of Arabic influence has been revived, and good evidence has been produced to show that the Romance peoples learned much of rhyme and meter from the Moors. It is also possible that the music of Islam, as well as that of the Christian Church, had some effect upon the art of the troubadours, for they, it should be remembered, composed their lyrics to be sung. Like Abélard, the typical troubadour was famous not only for his verses but also for his tunes, and both were frequently recorded in the same manuscript. The trouble is that the musical notation employed for these early pieces gives no indication of time,<sup>12</sup> and scholars are still disputing as to how the rhythm of the melody should be fitted to that of the words. Nevertheless, it is possible to gain some idea of how the twelfth-century poems were sung, and for that information we must be very grateful. Comparative study of music should eventually throw more light on this very obscure subject of origins.

Meanwhile, it is obvious that, even if we could be sure of the models that lay before the eyes of the earliest troubadours, we could by no means account for their genius. To know what was read or heard by an English schoolboy of the early nineteenth century will hardly explain the emergence of a Keats. We have to conclude that the Provençal lyrics, like those of the Goliardi, owed their vigor and beauty to the society in which they were produced. Poetic composition again flourished, along with other

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<sup>12</sup> See below, p. 462.

forms of artistic expression, as part of the great intellectual and cultural awakening that characterized western Europe in the twelfth century. The themes of the poets were very old, as were some of their forms, but their verse was marked by the freshness of youth.

From southern France the new fashion spread to all neighboring countries. Long before 1200, troubadours had come to enjoy the patronage of all the Spanish princes, of the Sicilian king, and of other lords to the northward. In this respect the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine, first to Louis VII and then to Henry II, began a new epoch in the literary history of their kingdoms. Bernard de Ventadour was only one of many lyric poets who sang at the Angevin court. Bertran de Born, a turbulent baron of Périgord, became famous throughout Europe for political as well as love intrigues, and both of these interests are reflected in his poetry. Having been attracted, like other gallant authors, to Normandy, he became a warm partisan of Henry II's eldest son. And when the young king suddenly died, Bertran wrote a famous lament that stands among the finest works of the century. Later he became a friend and follower of Richard Lion-Heart, who was himself a troubadour, though hardly one of genius. Meanwhile the poetic urge had come to be felt by dozens of northern French nobles whose grandfathers had rarely been able to read or write.

The  
*Trouvères*  
of the  
north

Down into the thirteenth century poets of southern Europe, even in Spain and Italy, continued to write in Provençal; but in the north many *trouvères* were using French by the later twelfth century and occasionally producing very attractive verse. As would be imagined, however, most of their lyric lacked the spontaneity of that which had been composed earlier. For example, when Conon de Béthune, on departing for the Fourth Crusade, writes a love song for his lady, we feel that he is doing so because it is the fashionable thing to do.<sup>13</sup> "My Body," he says, "may go to serve our Saviour, yet my heart remains wholly in her keeping." Had the first crusaders gone "sighing to Syria" or thought that each must "act chivalrously to secure at once paradise and honor and love of his lady"? By this time, in fact, aristocratic literature had entered a world of make-believe. More and more it had become dominated by a code of courtly love—what the

<sup>13</sup> See the complete poem in C. C. Abbott, *Early Mediaeval French Lyrics*, p. 105.

French call *courtoisie*. Warfare, adventure, and the old masculine chivalry had been subordinated to a new literary creed—the glorification of woman.

*Courtoisie* Under *courtoisie* love is made into an ideal, transcending all earthly relationship, and defined as a sort of spiritual vassalage. The knight must have a lady to serve; the lady must have a knight to do her service. And if the two are kept apart by geographic separation, by social inequality, or by marriage to other persons, the situation is all the more conducive to poetic effusion. So in the later mediæval lyric we can never be sure just where actuality ends and artistic imagination begins, for it is a poor poet who cannot invent mysterious lady-loves and entrancing situations. Some of these conventions in a formative stage may easily be detected throughout the works of the earliest troubadours; subsequently they became enormously exaggerated. The lyric grew stereotyped both in sentiment and in form. Ultimately, when a certain type of verse was chosen, it not only had to follow a certain theme; it also had to contain a certain number of lines, each with a certain number of syllables and a certain rhyme.

Many of these literary forms had been well established by the end of the twelfth century. We find, for instance, the *alba*, or dawn song, in which two lovers are warned that the night is past, but protest the incredible news—"it is not day; the lark has lied to us." The *pastourelle* tells how the knightly singer meets a simple shepherdess, how he talks to her, and how she inevitably succumbs to his masculine charm. The spinning song is a form of ballad wherein the lonely maid or the unhappy wife, over her monotonous work, sighs for the man of her heart. Some of these lyrics, written in the northern dialect, are very attractive. There is, however, a limit to the enjoyment of pieces which tell only of *belle Yolanz*, *belle Aiglentine*, or *belle Amelot*, always uttering the same thoughts. They make one long for a story written from a point of view other than that of the fine gentleman with a fatal power of captivating both queens and peasant girls.

*Courtoisie* naturally affected also the French epic. Alongside the traditional *chanson de geste* now appeared the long poem written in rhymed couplets, to be read rather than chanted. This we know as the romance—a literary form which has enjoyed continuous popularity down to the present. Its substance is what will easily be recognized as romantic: fair ladies, brave knights, cruel husbands, sinister plots, magicians, talking animals, fairies,

The  
romance

mysterious forests, enchanted palaces, fantastic adventures, perilous quests, and the like. Love is always prominent and the exotic element is strong. To be an ordinary French baron, like the chief actors in the old *chansons*, is not romantic. The hero should come from a distant land, or he should go there to find a damsel in distress. The authors of this new fiction ransacked antiquity, writing of Troy and of Rome, of Alexander the Great and of Æneas. Yet, no matter whence the characters were drawn, they were made to act and talk like lords and ladies of feudal France. The *courtoisie* was unchanged by the foreign environment. Thus also began the enormous vogue for the story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.

Some of this material may have come into France by way of Brittany, but most of it seems to have been popularized rather by Norman writers in England. Of the latter the most illustrious was Geoffrey of Monmouth, a clerk from the Welsh border, who in the first half of the twelfth century wrote a *History of the Britons*. This he offered to the public as a scholarly work, translated from an ancient Celtic chronicler. A number of critics, however, are convinced that Geoffrey's alleged source was a figment of the imagination; that his book was actually a combination of legend and sheer invention. Whatever its character, it had an amazing success, eventually winning for its author the bishopric of St. Asaph. Even before that promotion his romantic composition had become a mine for poets and other story-tellers, who in turn added characters and episodes to suit their own fancy. By the end of the twelfth century a cycle of Arthurian tales had been put into French verse by a number of talented authors, whence they were made over into German and English versions, eventually to inspire Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and many famous operas.

One of the first poets to dip into the *matière de Bretagne* was Marie de France. Of this gifted person little is known except what she says of herself: "Marie is my name; I am from France." So, although she wrote at the court of Henry II and Queen Eleanor, she was presumably born in the Capetian domain. Perhaps she was of noble extraction; at any rate, she was well educated, knowing Latin and possibly a smattering of the Celtic vernacular. She called her romances *Lays*, and for them she adapted, as she confesses, old materials, having no thought beyond the composition of an entertaining story in the language of the

Marie de  
France

aristocracy. That the *Lays* were very popular is attested by various references in subsequent literature, as well as by the large number of surviving manuscripts. From her romantic tales, recounted in easily flowing verse, we may judge the taste of polite society in her day.

In all, we have a dozen lays which are certainly by Marie. They include stories of a knight who changes himself into a falcon in order to visit his lady-love (*Yonec*), of a fairy princess who carries off her lover to Avalon (*Lanval*), of a werewolf (*Le Bisclavet*), and of various episodes in the Arthurian legend. Very characteristic is the lay of Gugemar. He, Marie tells us, was a baron of King Arthur and had but one fault, that he remained untouched by love—and so, of course, brought upon himself dire trouble. One day, while hunting in the forest, he wounds a marvelous white doe. But the arrow, glancing back, strikes him in the thigh. Then the doe speaks to him and tells him that he can never be healed except through the love of a dolorous lady. Mounting his horse, Gugemar rides to the sea, where he finds a ship with a bed waiting for him. He goes to sleep and a magic wind wafts the ship to the shore of a garden, beside which a beautiful lady is imprisoned in a tower by a cruel husband. She finds the knight, nurses him back to health, and for a while enjoys his love. Then he is discovered by the husband and sent away on the ship by which he arrived. Other adventures follow, and eventually, after long separation, the lovers are reunited. The husband is slain and the two henceforth live happily.

Chrétien  
de Troyes

By the end of the twelfth century polite society in France had become thoroughly infatuated with the *courtoisie* of the poets. Lords and ladies found infinite delight not only in listening to romantic tales of all sorts, but also in discussing the niceties of amatory conduct. Ovid's *Art of Love* enjoyed a great vogue in translation and inspired a number of similar compositions in the vernacular. It was for such a fashionable world that Chrétien de Troyes wrote his Arthurian romances. He was a native of Champagne and for a while enjoyed the patronage of Countess Marie, a daughter of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine; later he became attached to Philip, count of Flanders, who died on the crusade in 1191. Like Marie, Chrétien seems to have been essentially a popularizer of old materials. In suave verse he retold familiar stories, adorning his pages with elaborate pictures of beauty and chivalry in luxurious surroundings and with emi-

nently courteous conversations. Especially noteworthy is his emphasis on the psychology of love.

Each of Chrétien's romances is, in fact, a problem play. For instance, his *Lancelot* turns on the conflict between a knight's honor and his passion for a lady. In *Érec et Énide* the plot is based on the question as to what tests of devotion one lover could demand of the other. But these tales are too familiar to need detailed comment; leaving them, we may pass on to a consideration of literary developments in the subsequent period.

### 3. THE LITERATURE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

If one investigates any phase of secular literature in the Middle Ages, he will find it bearing close affinity to some phase of ecclesiastical literature. A similar generalization clearly holds good for mediæval music. From an early time the church had declared official what is known as plain chant—a system under which certain limited scales are used in certain prescribed ways. Only those notes represented by the white keys on the piano are sounded and the notes hardly vary in length, though some may be emphasized to suit the rhythm of the Latin prose. All voices sing the same part in unison, and without instrumental accompaniment. Ultimately derived from the choral music of the ancient Greeks, plain chant was consecrated by usage in the church at Rome and through papal influence was made universal throughout the west. Though often called Gregorian, it was not invented by Gregory the Great; he merely gave it, as part of the Latin ritual, the prestige of his support.

Mediæval  
music:  
Plain  
chant

Plain chant, being eminently suited to the practical demands of ecclesiastical service, has proved, through sheer force of simplicity, to be one of the great artistic successes of all time. Yet its triumph forced out or subordinated many other musical forms, some of which were perhaps of popular origin, for secular music of various kinds persisted all through the Dark Age. In this respect we have only the vaguest of information; without definite knowledge of the songs themselves, we can hardly determine the exact relationship that existed between those sung in the church and those sung outside. In the present connection the problem may be evaded by merely stating that the Middle Ages witnessed two musical innovations of great significance to the modern world: the beginnings of formal composition based upon harmony and a system of measuring music by distinguishing notes



according to their respective time values and grouping them in units of the same length.

Harmony  
and  
mensural  
music

The earliest arrangement of music to be sung in parts—for example, with tenor and bass—seems to have been inspired by a practical consideration: since voices in a men's choir would naturally vary in pitch, some would be allowed to sing above the melody and some below it. Such a practice would gradually lead to experimentation in harmonious effects, like those obtained by striking chords on a harp. This development can be traced back at least to the Carolingian period, and by the thirteenth century it had progressed far enough to be applied to the singing of popular rounds and to be explained by theoretical discussions of counterpoint. The music of the troubadours, like the plain chant of the church, was based upon free rhythm—that is to say, the melody was simply made to follow the rhythm of the words, without any regular beating of time. With the introduction of harmony, however, it became vitally important to measure the music so that each note should be sounded precisely at the proper moment. How the innovation came to be made is an obscure subject, but it is certain that mensural music was known to the Arabs as early as the tenth century and was first clearly presented to Christian Europe by Franco of Cologne (or Paris)<sup>14</sup> somewhere about the year 1200. Our modern music, which is one of the most characteristic of European contributions, may thus be said to have definitely emerged in the thirteenth century.

The begin-  
nings of  
the drama

Out of this same background of music and ecclesiastical Latin was evolved another great institution of modern culture—the drama. From a very early time parts of the official liturgy had, on special occasions, been enlarged by the insertion of added features. At Easter, for example, the choir might present, by way of a musical dialogue, the story of the Resurrection, or at Christmas that of the Nativity. From merely singing the sacred story, it was an easy step to act it out, with appropriate costumes and stage effects. Thus arose the religious plays called mysteries, concerning which we have a wealth of sources dating from the early Middle Ages. The more prominent themes were taken from the Bible, but the lives of popular saints also came to be frequently represented, and this practice allowed the introduction of many a realistic touch drawn from everyday life. At first the

<sup>14</sup> It is doubtful whether one man bore both names or whether they were two separate men. On musical theory among the Arabs, see above, p. 209.

mystery, being merely a supplement to the regular service, was given inside the church and in Latin. Eventually, however, the performance was transferred to the porch or to a stage erected beyond it. And since the object of the play was to instruct the people, it might to good advantage be put in the vernacular:

A very early example of such practice is the *Mystère d'Adam*, written in the first half of the twelfth century. The parts were of course taken by clergymen and for their benefit the stage directions are in Latin; but the dialogue is in French verse, amazingly spirited, with a touch of subtle wit that is wholly delightful. As the scene opens, Adam is working at one end of the stage, while Satan approaches Eve and says that he wants to talk to her. She promises discretion, for which Satan compliments her. Adam, he thinks, is distinctly her inferior. A little hard, admits Eve. "Though he be harder than hell (*plus dure que n'est enfers*), he shall be made soft," promises Satan; for he really should take better care of his wife.

The  
*Mystère  
d'Adam*

You are fresher than the rose and whiter than crystal, or snow that falls on ice in the vale. The Creator did not mate you well: you are too tender and he is too rough. Nevertheless, you are wiser than he. That's why I have done well to speak with you.

With such diabolic flattery the main question is introduced. The fruit which God has allowed them is no good, but that which He has denied them has marvelous virtue. In it is the secret of life and of power, the knowledge of both good and evil. "How does it taste?" asks poor Eve. "Celestial. . . ." "Is that the fruit?" "Yes, look at it." And so the story proceeds to its familiar end—a very human little drama, as may be seen from even these brief excerpts.

For a long time most plays, even when they came to be given by guilds and private associations, continued to be built on religious themes. In the thirteenth century, however, various new forms became popular, some of them inspired by the rich vernacular literature of that age. As already noted, one very prominent feature of scholastic learning was a fondness for symbolism and allegory. On the stage a similar tendency is perceptible in the vogue for the morality play, in which actors personifying virtues and vices develop a plot of edifying character. How the fashionable romance came under the same influence appears from the

Allegory  
and  
mysticism

*Romance of the Rose*, as begun by Guillaume de Lorris.<sup>15</sup> Here the Rose typifies the Lady sought by the Lover, who is aided or impeded by Idleness, Danger, Evil-Tongue, Shame, Fear, Fair-Welcome, Reason, Cupid, and Venus. About this time, too, the force of religion reasserted itself in allegorizing the Arthurian cycle. Various thirteenth-century authors combined Christian tradition, Celtic legend, and contemporary *courtoisie* in the famous sequence dealing with the Holy Grail. The central theme is the quest for the vessel that had caught the blood of the crucified Christ. And the fact that the successful hero is Galahad, the knight of perfect purity, shows how literary fashion had swung from the worldly loves of the troubadours to the mystic love of the church.

On the one hand, therefore, polite literature tended in the thirteenth century toward a moral and religious symbolism; on the other, it came to be strongly affected by an entirely different factor—realism. The courtly poetry of the twelfth century had, at its worst, the merit of refinement and graceful expression, and its romantic appeal is still powerful. Today, as then, one who craves escape from the actual world finds the world of make-believe wholly entrancing, at least for a while. But sooner or later the artificiality of the conventional romance grows tiresome. The monotony of people who could never have lived and of events that never could have happened becomes insufferable. The opposite extreme then seems a welcome change. It is found in the *fabliaux*, which were written solely for the sake of causing a laugh. The authors were, in general, the *jongleurs*—a class that by the thirteenth century had come to be increasingly disreputable. These entertainers, when they appeared in the baronial hall, sang one of the ancient *chansons de geste*, or perhaps one of the newer lays on a romantic theme; before a less fashionable audience in the local inn or market place, they selected less polite recitations, such as the *fabliaux*.

The  
*Fabliaux*

Well over a hundred stories of this sort have come down to us, mostly dating from the thirteenth century. They are written in rhymed verse which is often very crude. The literary form, however, is of no consequence; interest lies solely in the subject matter, which stands in sharp contrast to that of the contemporary romance. The *fabliaux* reveal no chivalrous prejudice; nobles

<sup>15</sup> For the additions by Jean de Meun, see below, p. 508.

are treated as very human persons, sometimes good and sometimes bad, and in any case as relatively unimportant characters. Nor is the peasant a leading character; he is too stupid to be interesting. More prominent are the ordinary bourgeois of the street. The merchant is commonly pictured as rich and successful, but in other respects a fool, liable to be victimized by any clever rascal who comes along. The favorite of the piece is likely to be the clerk—a wandering student or man of education without a job. When he arrives, the sensible citizen will lock up his valuables—also his wife and daughter, for, according to the *fabliaux*, women are never to be trusted. Though clever and desirable, they are utterly devoid of moral principles. High or low, young or old, women are a source of unending trouble to all but the happy adventurer who loves and leaves. Other stock characters are the priest and the monk, for neither of whom is any sympathy ever shown. Both are vicious hypocrites who deserve all the grief that they get. And they always get it. As soon as priest or monk is introduced, we know who is going to be the butt of the joke.

To judge from the frequency of certain tales in the manuscripts, the bourgeois audience of the thirteenth century was not overly nice in its tastes, for many of the *fabliaux* are nothing but smut. Others are *risqué* stories cribbed from classic authors or similar inventions from a more recent age. Some, however, can be told before any audience, and can still be counted on to raise a laugh. A good example of elementary humor is found in the tale of Brunain. A villein and his wife go to pray at Notre-Dame and there they hear a sermon by the priest, who tells them that all should give liberally to God and so receive a double reward. At home the villein and his wife talk over the matter and decide to give the priest their cow, Brunain. They do so, and the priest, after blessing them, puts Brunain out to graze along with his own cow. But during the night Brunain becomes homesick, breaks down the fence, and escapes, bringing the priest's cow along with her. So in the morning the villein and his wife discover that they have indeed received a double reward, and give fervent thanks to God for an evident miracle.

The story of the Poor Pedlar is a little more subtle. Arriving in a certain region with his horse and pack, he is unable to pay for fodder at the inn. But he hears from a local merchant that nearby is the pasture of a nobleman who is known to be very gen-

erous. The pedlar takes this suggestion, solemnly intrusting his animal to the care of the nobleman and to Almighty God. Then in the course of the night a wolf breaks into the pasture and kills the horse. What to do? In desperation the pedlar goes to the nobleman and tells him what has happened. "All right," says the latter; "here are thirty sous for the half of the horse that was entrusted to me; the other thirty you will have to collect from God." So the pedlar starts down the road on foot, and before he has gone far, he meets a monk. "Whose man are you?" he asks the worthy brother. "I am a man of God," is the response. "Aha!" exclaims the pedlar; "you're just the fellow I'm looking for." Whereupon he makes off with the monk's clothes for the thirty sous still owed him.

The  
Romance  
of Reynard

That only men of low birth enjoyed the *fabliaux* would be a conclusion entirely unwarranted by the evidence. All classes might relish a little fun and satire, as is shown by the enormous popularity of the Reynard cycle of romances. Fables about animals, notably those of Æsop, had been widely read since ancient times and there seems also to have been a body of Germanic folk tales about a fox (Reynard), a bear (Bruin), a wolf (Isengrim), a cat (Tybert), and the like. Yet it was unquestionably French clerks who first worked these various materials into a series of mock romances which remain among the best-loved works of the Middle Ages. Reynard and his peers are vassals of King Noble, the lion, who is very grand, but who is quite powerless to control his state. His barons are engaged in endless feuds and Reynard, in particular, is a professional robber. This unprincipled rascal plays cruel tricks on Isengrim and Tybert, eats the favorite wife of Chantecleer, lies his way out of solemn trials before the royal court, and keeps the reader's sympathy throughout. His fame is still attested by the fact that in modern French any fox is still *un renard*, instead of *un voupil* (from the Latin *vulpes*).

Aucassin  
et Nicolette

Inevitably, too, the realistic touch came to be applied to the more conventional romance, and the result, among lesser pieces, was the immortal story of *Aucassin et Nicolette*. Although the author's name is unknown, he lived in the early thirteenth century and was a great artist. To be appreciated, the romance should be read; here may be mentioned only two or three points of especial interest. In the first place, the form is very original, being part prose and part verse—both clever, and blended in such a way as to enhance the charm of each. Secondly, the substance, though super-

ficially conventional, is constantly turned in a very unconventional way. Aucassin is told by his father that he may not marry Nicolette, who was originally a slave girl, and that, if he does not give her up, he will go to hell. Aucassin replies that he does not mind; all the best people go there and he prefers their company. Later we hear of a miracle, but such a miracle as never appeared on the ecclesiastical stage. A pilgrim, lying sick in bed, is suddenly healed by the sight of Nicolette, who chances to pass that way with her kirtle and smock held high.

In such passages the quiet irony of the author is obvious; he never takes even his leading characters quite seriously. But once, when we least expect it, we obtain a brief glimpse of real tragedy. Aucassin, searching for Nicolette with tears running down his face, meets a villein, who asks him why he weeps. Loath to tell the truth, Aucassin lamely answers that he has lost his dog. Then the villein turns on him and cries him shame, that he should weep over such a trifle. As for himself, he has cause to grieve. "Wherefore so?" asks Aucassin.<sup>16</sup>

"Sir, I will tell thee. I was hireling to a rich villein, and drove his plough; four oxen had he. But three days since came on me great misadventure, whereby I lost the best of my oxen, Roger, the best of my team. Him go I seeking, and have neither eaten nor drunken these three days; nor may I go to the town, lest they cast me into prison, seeing that I have not wherewithal to pay. Out of all the wealth of the world I have no more than ye see on my body. A poor mother bare me, that had no more but one wretched bed; this have they taken from under her, and she lies in the very straw. This ails me more than mine own case, for wealth comes and goes; if now I have lost, another tide I will gain, and will pay for mine ox whenas I may; never for that will I weep. But you weep for a stinking hound. Foul fall whoso thinks well of thee!"

So Aucassin tells him that he is a good comforter and gives him money to pay for his ox—but the writer was thinking of more than an episode in a sentimental story.

The romance of *Aucassin et Nicolette* is partly in prose; others of the same period, notably the series of the Holy Grail, are entirely so. Henceforth the newer form of literary composition becomes more and more popular. French prose had already been used by Geoffroy de Villehardouin for his chronicle of the Fourth Crusade, the substance of which will be seen in another connec-

French  
prose

<sup>16</sup> From the translation by Andrew Lang.

tion.<sup>17</sup> He was the first of a famous series of memoir-writers which was to include Joinville, Froissart, Commines, and a host of subsequent authors. In this respect, as in epic, lyric, and romantic poetry, France led and Europe followed. In the thirteenth century the homeland of chivalry, *courtoisie*, scholastic theology, and Gothic arts held a cultural supremacy unquestioned throughout the west. Centuries before, the Germanic saga had emerged in written form, but the age of the crusades witnessed the abandonment of that literary type, save in far-off Iceland. With the Norman Conquest of England, the old Anglo-Saxon virtually disappeared as a language of formal composition, and what we recognize as English literature—the first that we can read without a grammar and dictionary—began with Chaucer in the late fourteenth century. And unfortunately the vogue for French forms among the Germans of the continent led to the almost total destruction of their ancient heroic poems.<sup>18</sup>

German  
literature

The *Nibelungenlied*, as it now stands, is half saga and half romance; being an old tale reedited in the thirteenth century under the powerful influence of French *courtoisie*. Fine as it is, we regret the loss of the original. Meanwhile, too, German poets had been inspired to produce their own versions of many French works. The *Chanson de Roland* became the *Rolandshied*, and alongside it appeared by the end of the twelfth century various romances of Alexander, of Troy, of the Arthurian court, and even of Reynard (*Reinhart Fuchs*). Another imported fashion was the courtly lyric of the troubadours, whose German disciples called themselves *Minnesinger* (singers of love). From them flowed a prodigious stream of spring songs, dawn songs, pastorals, amorous dialogues, and the like. Much of this literature, being sheer imitation, was of course very inferior; but by the thirteenth century certain German developments of the Arthurian cycle had attained striking originality—especially the *Tristan* of Gottfried von Strassburg and the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach. And among the *Minnesinger* had emerged one great lyric poet, Walther von der Vogelweide.

Born of a lesser noble family in the Austrian Tyrol, Walther apparently served his poetical apprenticeship at the court of Vienna, then the most fashionable center of literary production in Germany. As the protégé of a Hohenstaufen prince, the young

<sup>17</sup> See below, pp. 524 f.

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 290.

poet naturally took that side in the troubled period following the death of Henry VI, devoting much of his earlier work to a bitter attack on Pope Innocent III. Yet from these years date his finest lyrics, simple love songs like the immortal *Unter den Linden*. Subsequently Walther lost his favored position at Vienna and spent many years as a professional *Minnesinger*, wandering from court to court. Finally the emperor Frederick II gave him a little fief that helped to make his later life somewhat happier. Although he continued to produce lyrics, most of them were inevitably of the bread-and-butter variety, and his later art suffered, like that of all his contemporaries, from an undue fondness for intricate meters and rhyme systems. From first to last, however, Walther maintained an admirable originality of thought, refusing merely to echo conventional sentiments and praising what he really admired—unaffected love for woman, whether or not she could style herself a lady.

Walther  
von der  
Vogel-  
weide

Likewise in Spain and Italy the literary models of the time were French or Provençal, and most poets, when they came to write in their native vernacular, were satisfied with copies and adaptations. The first truly great monument of Spanish literature is the *Poema del Cid*—an epic fragment composed in the twelfth century on the life of the great Castilian hero, who had already become a legendary figure. In actual life the Cid was Rodrigo Díaz de Bivar, a by no means saintly adventurer of the later eleventh century. The *Poema*, earliest of a whole series of romantic glorifications, deals only with a few episodes in the Cid's career. As literature, it lacks polish and symmetry, but it is imbued with true poetic fervor, and it presents a vivid picture of Spanish life and ideals in the age of the great Moorish wars. With respect to vernacular literature, Italy lagged far behind France—behind even Spain and Germany. Our first very clear evidence concerning the literary use of Italian comes from the reign of Frederick II (d. 1250), and another half-century passed before the glorious Dante set a new standard of composition in the language. These subjects will be treated in following chapters.

Spanish  
and  
Italian  
literature



## CHAPTER XX

### DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FINE ARTS

#### I. ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE

Relation  
to Byzan-  
tine art

THE languages developed out of Latin in the Middle Ages we call Romance, whereas the system of architecture that was evolved from Roman elements during the same period we call Romanesque. In French both ideas are expressed by the same word, *roman*, and that usage is more logical than ours, for the parallel between the two phases of mediæval culture is very striking. The sixth century witnessed the perfection of the East Roman art known as Byzantine,<sup>1</sup> from which much was later borrowed by the Arabs when they first began to put up great mosques and palaces. In Italy, too, Byzantine influence was strong for a time after Justinian's reconquest of the peninsula and it remained dominant at Venice for many centuries. During the Dark Age, however, the west generally was in no condition to appreciate the civilization of Constantinople and remained as little affected by its art as by its literature. Not until the eleventh century did Latin Christendom begin to produce architectural monuments of any significance, and then it very characteristically preferred Roman to Greek models. The Romanesque style was thus a postponed development from the primary sources of the Byzantine, rather than a direct offshoot from the latter.

The  
basilican  
church

The central feature of the typical Byzantine church was a great dome, to which lesser domes, half-domes, vaulted passages, and the like might be added in a variety of designs. The Romanesque church, on the other hand, was invariably built on the plan of a Roman basilica. This was a comparatively simple building, much used under the emperors for all sorts of public gatherings, and therefore adaptable to the needs of a Christian congregation. In form the basilica was an elongated rectangle, divided lengthwise by two rows of columns into a nave running down the middle and an aisle (or two aisles) on each side. Supported by the colonnades, there was a clerestory—a section of the building elevated above the rest and fitted with windows to illuminate the

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 123 f.

interior. The four walls might, of course, be constructed of stone or brick, but the roof, whether flat or gabled, was of timber. The entrance of the basilica was at one end; the other was frequently rounded to form an apse, where, on a raised platform, was placed the chair of the presiding magistrate. (See Figures 8, 9).

To such a basilica, when specially designed for Christian worship, might be added transepts, bringing the whole edifice into the shape of a Latin cross. And it was normally given a definite orientation, with the altar placed in the apsidal end, facing the nave and the main entrance to the west. So, on stepping within the portal, the worshiper was immediately confronted by an impressive vista—a stately colonnade that led the eye to the holiest symbols of the Christian mystery. Here shone marbles stripped from pagan temples, combined with fresco, gilding, and—in some of the earlier structures—Byzantine mosaic (see Plate IV—Sant' Apollinare). But all this splendor might be ruined if, as often happened, the timber roof burned off. Accordingly, architects came to devote their

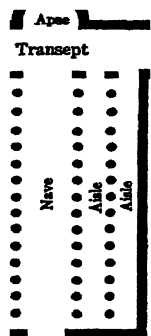


FIGURE 8.—GROUND PLAN OF A BASILICAN CHURCH.

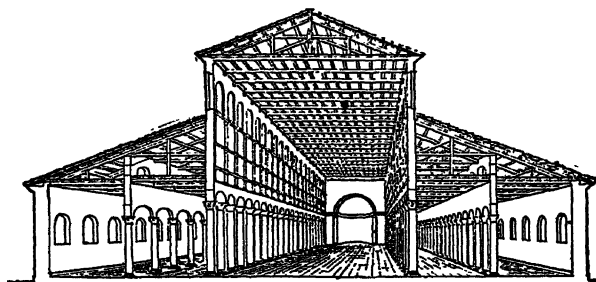


FIGURE 9.—SECTION OF A BASILICAN CHURCH.

attention to the problem of vaulting the aisles and the nave with stone, and out of their experiments in this connection were evolved new structural principles that eventually led to the system called Gothic.

For vaulting a rectangular area two methods had been used by the Romans; the barrel vault and the cross vault. The first

Barrel  
vaults and  
cross  
vaults

was merely the prolongation of a semi-circular arch to form a half-cylinder of masonry, the weight of which was equally distributed along the supporting walls. The area to be covered might, on the other hand, be divided into squares (called bays), over each of which two barrel vaults were made to intersect at right angles (see Figure 10). The weight of such a cross vault would be concentrated at the four corners (A, B, C, D), joined by four semi-circular arches (AB, BC, CD, DA), and diagonally by two lines of intersection called groins (AC, BD). In the basilican church the aisles could not readily be barrel-vaulted because on one side there was a colonnade instead of a wall, but by introducing certain structural changes they could be cross-vaulted. The inward thrust of the arches toward the nave was counteracted

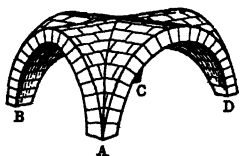


FIGURE 10.—CROSS VAULT.

by the weight of heavy clerestory walls resting on sturdier columns. Toward the outside the thrust was met by raising buttresses—thick fins of masonry—against the aisle walls (see Figures 11, 14).

The more difficult problem was the vaulting of the nave. Because of its greater width, it could not be divided into bays that equaled those of the aisles.

Transverse lines from column to column across the nave would produce oblong rather than square compartments—and how could half-cylinders of different heights be made to intersect on the same plane? Besides, it was hard to see how to buttress the clerestory walls above the aisle roofs. Normally, therefore, architects made no attempt to cross-vault the nave. Instead they used a barrel vault, and such a mass of stone-work thrown over the nave tended to doom both the colonnade and the clerestory windows. Slender columns had to be replaced by enormous piers to support the walls that carried the massive vault. And since these walls had to be of uniform thickness, they could not be pierced to admit much light. The result was a low, gloomy interior, characterized by heavy masonry, extensive flat surfaces, and strongly marked horizontal lines. To a certain extent, the plainness might be relieved by frescoing, but the style of construction was not such as to encourage delicacy of ornamentation.

Such in général was the Romanesque church of the early twelfth century, whether erected in Italy, Germany, France, Spain,

or England. For by that time all these countries were witnessing a rapid advance in ecclesiastical architecture—a striking phase of the great religious, intellectual, and economic revival that swept western Europe in the age of the crusades. Merely to glance at the magnificent structures raised by Latin Christendom between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries is to gain direct evidence of mounting wealth and advancing culture. Minute criticism of individual churches is, of course, impossible here; there is no space for many illustrative photographs. Yet it may not be unprofitable to mention a few outstanding examples of the Romanesque style, in the hope that interested students will look up the pictures necessary to make these remarks intelligible.

Types of  
Roman-  
esque

Many basilican churches can be found in Italy, especially at Rome; but aside from matters of decoration, they have slight architectural interest. For more ambitious mediæval structures we must turn, as would be expected, to the great commercial republics. The famous St. Mark's at Venice, which was designed in the eleventh century and decorated in the course of the next two hundred years, is wholly Byzantine—a Greek cross with a great dome at the center and a lesser one over each of the four arms. At Pisa, on the other side of Italy, the sumptuous cathedral, consecrated in 1118, is Romanesque.<sup>2</sup> Although its plan was very advanced for that age, including double aisles and widely extended transepts, its construction remained somewhat primitive. Only the aisles were cross-vaulted; the nave was given the timber roof of the ordinary basilica, which permitted the retention of a windowed clerestory and of antique columns to support it. Inside and outside the church is virtually covered with varicolored marble and the external decoration is particularly striking. Simple but remarkably beautiful arcading across the façade is carried up to the very tip of the gable, and this effect is repeated on the campanile, the famous leaning bell-tower of the later twelfth century (see Plate III).

Tuscany

Compared with the cathedral of Pisa, the contemporary buildings of Lombardy seem coarse and semi-barbarous. In place of marble we here find rough local stone, and in place of antique columns rudely carved masonry piers. Nevertheless, it was the northern region that first witnessed the completion of the Romanesque system. No church, assuredly, had a prouder history than

Lombardy

<sup>2</sup> Except for the central tower and the baptistry.

that of St. Ambrose (Sant' Ambrogio) at Milan; so one might expect it to lead the way toward new architectural standards. The existing structure is said to be the oldest completely vaulted church in Italy. Rebuilt in the later eleventh century, it somehow escaped destruction at the hands of Frederick Barbarossa and, with considerable "restoration," yet stands today. The vaults in their entirety can hardly antedate 1100, but they are very remarkable. The nave is divided into five bays, each corresponding to two in

the aisles and so obtaining a square outline. Of these bays, three are cross-vaulted, one is barrel-vaulted, and one is topped by a low octagonal tower to admit light over the altar. Otherwise the church would be thrown into gloom, for one continuous gabled roof covers the whole building, dispensing with a clerestory altogether and providing only an enclosed gallery (called a triforium) over each aisle. Thus, in spite of the cross-vaulting, the architects were not able to perceive how that system could be used in connection with clerestory windows (see Plate IV).

Elsewhere in Lombardy the barrel-vaulted nave was usual, and in French Romanesque it long remained the normal construction. So in the churches of Provence the aisles alone are cross-vaulted, while the nave is covered by

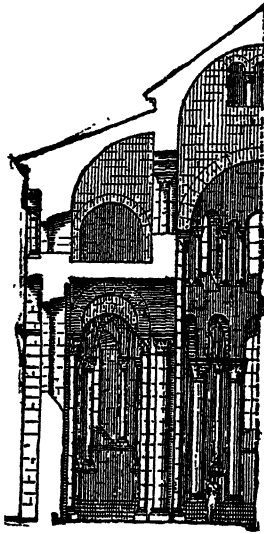


FIGURE 11.—SECTION OF  
NOTRE-DAME DU PORT.

Provence

solid masonry shaped on the outside to form a gable roof and on the inside to constitute a barrel vault. The enormous weight of this superstructure is borne on thick walls buttressed over the aisles by quadrant vaults, quarter-cylinders of stone, which leave no room for clerestory windows (see Figure 11). The piers and arches of the interior thus rise overhead in semi-darkness. A fine example of such construction is the church of Saint-Trophime at Arles, which was built toward the middle of the twelfth century. Here, as if to make up for the plainness inside the church, is a glorious portal, with rich carvings very happily combined with flat wall spaces. Above the door is seen Christ surrounded by the

four beasts of the Apocalypse,<sup>3</sup> and below them a frieze bearing the twelve apostles, together with other figures representing the saved and the damned. To right and left are statues of various saints set off by columns and pilasters (see Plate V). To the rear of the church is a remarkably beautiful cloister, decorated by sculpture that suggests Roman inspiration. Yet the total effect is entirely original and we can only say that the art of Saint-Trophime and of the neighboring churches is characteristically Provençal, and very lovely.

Almost exactly the same style of construction is found in the churches of Auvergne and Toulouse, such as Notre-Dame du Port at Clermont-Ferrand and Saint-Sernin at Toulouse. The latter is particularly noteworthy for its great size and monumental design.<sup>4</sup> It has double aisles and an apse with five projecting chapels, thus completing the typical end of the French cathedral—what is known as the *chevet* (see Plate III). In Aquitaine, on the other hand, the great mediæval buildings are surprisingly Byzantine in their system of vaulting. The church of Saint-Front at Périgueux, for example, has five domes arranged as in the famous St. Mark's at Venice, and the contemporary cathedral of Angoulême is provided not merely with a dome over the crossing, but with three others that serve to vault the nave. Little more than the design could have been brought from the east. The workmen, like the materials, were obviously Aquitanian. So the sculpture that was effectively used to decorate the façades of the local churches was essentially a native product (see Plate III).

Southern  
France

The greatest Romanesque monument of Burgundy—since only ruins are left at Cluny—is the abbey church of Vézelay which was begun in 1089. Structurally it is very remarkable. At Cluny the nave was barrel-vaulted according to the ordinary plan; here, on the other hand, it was cross-vaulted. And although the vaulting was crudely done, the bold architect took advantage of it to obtain a relatively high clerestory (see Plate V). What he did not understand was how to buttress the transverse arches from the outside; and if it had not been for subsequent improvements, the vault would have collapsed. For one other feature the church of Vézelay is especially noteworthy—the extraordinary sculpture over the main portal (see Plate X). The figures, to be sure, are badly drawn; the details are crude, even grotesque. Yet the com-

Northern  
France

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 490.

<sup>4</sup> The lofty tower and steeple over the crossing are later additions.

position as a whole is very decorative, and it has a vigor that proclaims it the beginning of a new art, rather than a reminiscence of the past.

Owing to the development that will be explained in the following section, little Romanesque construction survives in northern France. For additional examples of the style we must pass through the Capetian domain to Normandy, the rulers of which proved themselves as ardently devoted to building as to warfare. In their tremendous structures—plain to the point of grimness, but magnificently strong and admirably proportioned—the Norman character is vividly reflected. Such are the two great abbeys founded at Caen by William the Conqueror and his wife Matilda, the *Abbaye-aux-Hommes* and the *Abbaye-aux-Dames*. Each of them apparently was at first provided with a wooden roof over the nave, which was later replaced by a masonry vault of advanced design. In both cases, too, the exterior has been much altered by additions made in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The primitive Romanesque must be looked for below the steeples and decorated upper stories. If attention is centered on that portion, the characteristic Norman façade will stand out prominently—the gabled end of the nave, with round-arched doors and windows flanked by massive square towers almost devoid of ornamentation (see Plate VI).

England In their Sicilian kingdom the Normans quite naturally made use of the architectural forms which had already appeared there. Such great buildings as the palace chapel at Palermo and the cathedral of Monreale are a combination of the Romanesque, Byzantine, and Saracenic styles. In the England of 1066, on the contrary, there was no art to rival that of Normandy, for the Saxons had never been great builders. On taking over the country, the Normans systematically razed such cathedrals and abbeys as already existed and at once began work on new structures of unprecedented grandeur, thus turning much of their confiscated wealth into thank-offerings to God. Few of the great churches erected between 1066 and 1100 have retained their original design, but in spite of all subsequent demolition and remodeling, England contains a great deal more Romanesque architecture than does Normandy.

The finest monument of the sort is unquestionably Durham Cathedral, with its commanding position inside a loop of the River Wear (see Plate VI). Begun in 1093, the exterior of the

church was virtually completed in the first quarter of the twelfth century. Only the central tower is of a later style; the two western towers are typically Norman and deserve to be ranked among the world's architectural triumphs. The beautiful cathedral of Norwich may likewise be classified among the Norman churches, although it received a number of additions in the fifteenth century. Winchester Cathedral, with a total length of over five hundred feet, was also remodeled in the later Middle Ages, but it still has its Romanesque transepts and central tower. And in many other churches—notably those of Ely, Canterbury, St. Albans, and Tewkesbury—various features clearly reveal their eleventh-century origin. Everywhere the Norman work is characterized by its massive construction—tremendous columns, piers, and arches, decorated with simple geometrical patterns in spirals, diamonds, zigzags, and the like. Only very rarely did the Norman artists attempt human figures, and then their results were ludicrous. They were masons rather than sculptors.

The early Christian architecture of Spain was Romanesque of the southern French type, as in the cathedrals of Santiago de Compostella, Avila, Lerida, and Salamanca. The Romanesque of Germany, on the other hand, was largely inspired by that of Lombardy. And since it continued to be the ruling style of the Rhinelands throughout the thirteenth century, many fine examples have come down to us. Though built on a basilican plan, these German churches are marked by certain striking peculiarities. As a rule, they have an apse at each end of the nave—a feature that rules out the splendid western façade so characteristic of the French cathedral. The main entrance is placed on the side; for the sake of symmetry a second transept is sometimes added; and in any case both eastern and western ends are marked by a series of three towers, either round or square. Quite typical in such respects are the great cathedrals of Worms, Speyer, and Mainz, as well as the famous abbey of Laach (see Plate III). German Romanesque, like the Norman, is extremely plain, and all too often its plainness is not relieved by delicacy of proportion. Though sturdy and honest, it lacks grace—the quality that almost invariably pervades the contemporary architecture of France.

Spain  
and  
Germany

## 2. GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

In Romanesque as in Roman construction the building consisted essentially of walls which supported a roof. When the roof



Origins of  
Gothic  
construc-  
tion

was light, the walls could be pierced by many arched openings, or even—as in the case of the clerestory walls—partly replaced by colonnades. When, however, a barrel vault was substituted for a timber covering, the added weight made clerestory windows impossible and forced the placing of heavy piers between nave and aisles. Cross-vaulting had the advantage of concentrating this weight at certain points and for that reason came to be regularly employed over the aisles. But architects who sought to apply the system to the nave found that it raised two problems of extreme difficulty: how to intersect half-cylinders of different heights and how to support the thrust of the arches against the clerestory walls. Out of efforts to solve these problems was gradually evolved the revolutionary method of construction which we know as Gothic.<sup>5</sup> The credit for this achievement—one of the most noteworthy in the entire history of art—unquestionably goes to the versatile French people.

At the opening of the twelfth century the greater churches in northwestern Europe were abbeys rather than cathedrals. But the rapid development of material prosperity in the towns, which coincided with a great religious and intellectual revival, rendered possible new standards of architecture for the secular clergy. Especially in the Capetian domain each city strove to erect a more splendid church than the world had yet seen, and under this impetus ecclesiastical architecture made astonishing progress. At the accession of Louis VI the Romanesque style was universal throughout the kingdom; his grandson lived to see the perfection of Gothic. By this later age the new art included a system of lavish ornamentation that cannot fail to impress even the superficial observer. Yet it should always be remembered that the Gothic style was fundamentally a matter of construction, that its decorative effects were secondary developments. To give windows a fancy outline, to spread exuberant carvings across a façade, or to cover a roof with spires and pinnacles is not and never has been to produce a Gothic building. The latter must be characterized by certain structural features which are logically necessitated by a peculiar form of vaulting.

As already remarked, mediæval architects had trouble in putting a cross vault over an oblong space. Half-cylinders of dif-

<sup>5</sup> It had, of course, no connection with the Goths. In the fifteenth-century reaction against the mediæval styles, the term Gothic came to be used as a synonym for barbarous.

ferent diameters could not be made to intersect without resorting to clumsy expedients. But if the cylinders were pointed at the top, the task could be done easily and elegantly, for the height of a pointed arch can be varied without changing its breadth. It was the realization of this fact, rather than the invention of the pointed arch, that revolutionized cross-vaulting. The Romanesque churches of Provence had normally been made with barrel vaults of pointed section because that form of construction lessened the outward thrust on the walls. The Arabs, long before, had used pointed arches for the sake of variety in decoration. Until the experiment was tried by French architects in the early twelfth century, however, no one had used the unconventional form to simplify cross-vaulting (see Figures 11, 12).



FIGURE 12.—ARCHES.

In the same way another old device was now discovered to possess unexpected value. This was the practice of ribbing the vault. In a barrel vault heavy transverse ribs had often been placed from pillar to pillar. In a cross vault the same scheme was sometimes applied to the four sides of each bay; and it now occurred to builders that, if diagonal ribs<sup>6</sup> were built along the groins, lighter stone could be used to cover the intervening spaces. Thus the weight of the vault would be reduced and a considerable saving made in the cost of materials. But when oblong compartments were cross-vaulted, the groins were inevitably twisted in peculiar ways. So the bolder architects abandoned the old surfaces altogether. Ribs were constructed from four or from six supports<sup>7</sup> to the geometrical center of the bay, thus constituting a series of intersecting arches. And finally thin slabs of stone were arched to form a panel between each rib and the next (see Figure 13).

This was the Gothic vault, radically different from the Roman

<sup>6</sup> A very early use was in Sant' Ambrogio at Milan.

<sup>7</sup> Called respectively quadripartite and sexpartite vaulting. The latter was developed first, as a modification of the Sant' Ambrogio plan, whereby one bay of the nave corresponds to two bays of the aisle.

The  
pointed  
arch

The rib-  
and-panel  
vault

The flying  
buttress

cross vault out of which it had been developed. Through its employment of the pointed arch and because of its relatively light weight, the Gothic vault could be carried to heights undreamed of in Romanesque construction. And as was soon demonstrated in actual practice, it could be readily adapted to cover irregular areas of all sorts—such as those encountered at the apsidal end of the church. The one problem that remained was an efficient method of counteracting the outward thrust of the vaulting arches where they converged on piers along the clerestory wall. Frequently, when a nave was barrel-vaulted, continuous support was provided along the sides by means of quadrant vaults under the aisle roofs.<sup>8</sup> When cross-vaulting was similarly employed, such a quadrant vault would logically be reduced to a series of curved

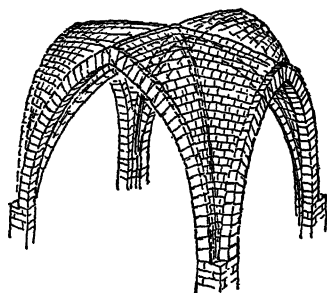


FIGURE 13.—GOTHIC VAULT.

buttresses placed only against the points that needed support. But these points, if a clerestory were constructed, would be high above the aisle roofs. No matter; the Gothic architect, caring nothing for tradition, brought the buttresses out from their concealment and built them right through the air to meet any possible thrust from the interior arches.

The  
Gothic  
skeleton

As the result of these improvements, the church no longer consisted of walls holding up a roof. The perfected Gothic building, on the contrary, was a towering framework of slender masonry piers and arches supported from the outside by flying buttresses. As far as stability was concerned, it needed no walls, even after the vaults had been completed and slanting timber roofs had been placed over them to keep off the weather. When architects came to appreciate this truth, they enlarged the windows of aisle, clerestory, and apse, so that glass filled virtually the entire space from one pier to the next. The interior was thus flooded with light; the massive columns, the heavy arches, the extensive wall surfaces that had characterized the Romanesque style disappeared. The three horizontal stages of the nave—arcade, triforium, and clerestory—were still indicated by delicate moldings, but their height was

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 474.

enormously increased and all structural members were given soaring outlines that rose from the pavement to the crown of the vault. (See Figure 14.)

The development briefly sketched above can be traced step by step in the churches of northern France. As early as the opening years of the twelfth century an attempt was made at Vézelay to cross-vault the nave and so to provide a high clerestory. The builders, however, underestimated the outward thrust of their

Transitional  
churches

arches, and subsequently, when the device had come into general use, flying buttresses were added. Meanwhile, in the first quarter of the century, the advantages of diagonal vaulting ribs and of the pointed arch had also come to be clearly understood. Profiting by this experience, the illustrious Suger, about 1136, began a new abbey church at Saint-Denis, the first great edifice to be designed on a truly Gothic plan. Within a hundred years it was already thought out of date and was largely replaced by a more magnificent structure. Yet enough of Suger's church remains to show that, while round arches were preserved in the façade, pointed-arch construction ruled throughout the interior. So, too, the cathedrals of Senlis, Sens, and Noyon, all dating from the middle of the twelfth century, display a transitional stage of architecture. Although their system of vaults and buttresses is Gothic, they still retain such vestiges of the Romanesque style as round-arched windows, massive piers, and cylindrical columns.

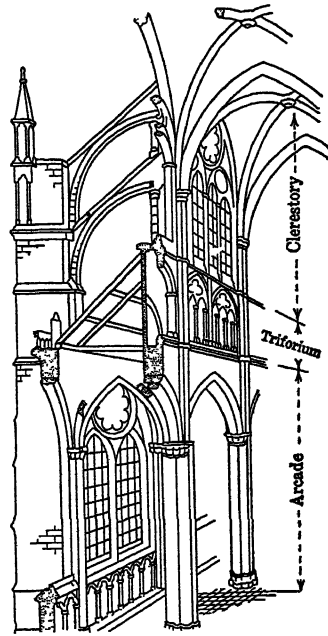


FIGURE 14.—SKELETON OF AMIENS CATHEDRAL.

This last feature reappears in the nave of the great cathedral of Notre-Dame at Paris, which was commenced in 1163. But it is interesting to note that, before the western end was completed, some one had been inspired to substitute for the round column one with four attached shafts (see the cross-section in Figure 15).

Gothic  
cathedrals

Such piers immediately became characteristic of the perfected Gothic interior, bringing the structural lines of the vault and clerestory down to the pavement itself—a process which culminated in the cathedrals of Chartres, Amiens, and Reims. Here we encounter an important fact that must be taken into account when considering the greatest architectural monuments of mediæval France: it is very exceptional for one of them to be designed throughout in a single harmonious style. Even when a uniform plan was attempted, it would not be consistently followed out. The advance of Gothic art was so rapid that one portion of the church would be antiquated before another was started, and continual changes would be introduced as the work progressed. Instead of comparing cathedrals, it is thus necessary to compare their individual features.

At Chartres, for example, we find in the façade two square towers remaining from an older church which was largely destroyed by fire in 1194. One of them is surmounted by a celebrated masonry spire of the twelfth century; the other by an ornate construction of the sixteenth. Between the towers are three famous sculptured portals, almost Romanesque in outline, and above them a handsome rose window. Behind the façade the body of the church remains very much as it was built in the

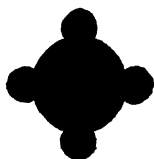


FIGURE 15.—  
SECTION OF A  
GOTHIC PIER.

early thirteenth century. Nave, aisles, transepts, and apse are of the purest Gothic throughout. The stained glass is the finest in the world. And the transepts end in porches of unrivaled magnificence, containing a wealth of statuary that is almost incredible. The façade, accordingly, is quite out of harmony with the rest of the building. In this respect Chartres yields pre-eminence to Paris. (See Plate X.)

Perhaps it was due to the influence of a twelfth-century design that the façade of Notre-Dame is so charmingly simple. The arched openings are only slightly pointed. The horizontal lines, which roughly indicate the stories of the interior, are strongly brought out by uninterrupted bands of decoration. And they, together with the richly carved portals and the splendid windows, are relieved by extensive plain surfaces. The fundamental plan is still that of the Abbaye-aux-Hommes at Caen and other Ro-

manesque churches: two great towers stand in front of the aisles and dominate the whole edifice. Here at Paris they are magnificently executed, skillfully combining an effect of airy grace with a very obvious solidity (see Plate VI). The nave of the church, as already noted, varies considerably, retaining a good deal of transitional work alongside later improvements. Apart from the western front, the most remarkable portion is unquestionably the double-aisled apse. Internally it is a marvel of Gothic vaulting; externally, with its charming pattern of flying buttresses, it provides a subject which artists along the Seine never tire of sketching (see Plate VIII).

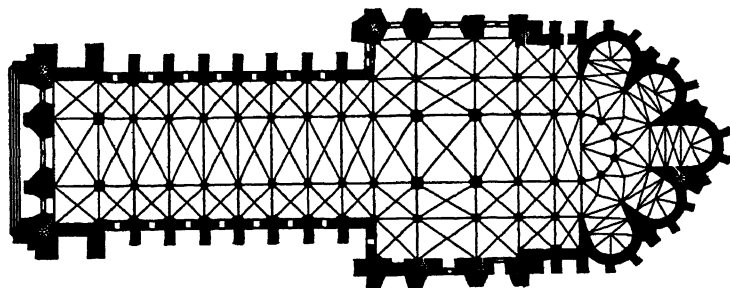


FIGURE 16.—GROUND PLAN OF REIMS CATHEDRAL.

Of all the mediæval French cathedrals, that of Reims has long been considered the finest, and, at least in point of monumental design, the verdict must be confirmed. The old church was burned in 1210 and the new one, immediately begun, was almost wholly completed before the end of the century. Unlike Paris and Amiens, Reims Cathedral has a single-aisled nave, but beyond the transepts the aisles are doubled. One aisle is then continued about the apse, which is also surrounded by a series of five semi-circular chapels—together forming the handsomest *chevet* in France (see Figure 16). In fact, the whole body of the church, through elegance of proportion and perfection of design, quite deserves its reputation. Especially the exterior of the nave, with its series of pinnacled buttresses, has great dignity and charm (see Plate VIII). Although the ends of the transepts are comparatively plain, the western façade, which was not completed till the fifteenth century, is excessively ornate. The exaggerated portal roofs are provided with false gable ends that obscure the true structure of the building. The towers are so overloaded with

ornament that they have a frosted effect. Here may be discerned the tendency of later Gothic to degenerate into meaningless decoration.

Amiens  
and  
Beauvais

Amiens Cathedral was begun shortly after Reims, and its façade, though more elaborate than that of Paris, follows very much the same design. As originally contemplated, it must have been very beautiful; unfortunately the upper portion was modified to suit the flamboyant tastes of a later generation and topped with fancy towers that have neither symmetry nor sturdiness (see Plate VI). Structurally, this cathedral has been hailed as the peak of Gothic accomplishment. Indeed, the only criticism raised against it has been that it is too coldly mathematical in its perfection. Its nave reaches a total height of 141 feet, as compared with 125 at Reims and 106 at Chartres. Only one Gothic building overtops it, the cathedral of Beauvais, where the arches intersect 154 feet above the pavement. But this structure proved over-ambitious, for the vault fell twice, necessitating the insertion of an extra pair of columns in each bay. Although only half of Beauvais Cathedral was built, and that not very securely, it is very lovely, with a relatively lower arcade than at Amiens and a towering clerestory set with magnificent windows.

The  
Gothic  
interior

Any one who has imagined that the Gothic style implies a riot of exuberant ornament should study the interiors of these great French cathedrals. There he will find, aside from the designs in stained glass, only the simplest of decoration. The capitals and an occasional molding are carved in unostentatious patterns, and a little delicate tracery may be added to set off the openings in the triforium and elsewhere. That is all, except for an almost incredible refinement of structural outlines. The breath-taking beauty of nave, transepts, and apse resides in their undecorated stonework. Here, rather than in accidental features of the exterior, is to be seen the acme of Gothic art (see Plate IX).

Gothic in  
the north-  
ern fiefs

In the preceding pages it has been possible to mention only a few outstanding examples of French Gothic. A fuller account would have to give attention to the cathedrals of Bourges, Laon, and Soissons, as well as to various lesser churches in the Île de France. By the thirteenth century, furthermore, the Gothic style had come to dominate throughout the fiefs of Normandy, Flanders, Champagne, and Burgundy. Rouen, Bayeux, Coutances, Ghent, Brussels, Troyes, and other towns now witnessed the erec-

tion of towering Gothic structures, largely inspired by those of the royal domain, but preserving many features peculiar to the respective localities. Especially remarkable is the famous Norman abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel, built on the summit of a rocky islet just off the Breton border. The original church is a charming example of early Romanesque, to which was added in the thirteenth century a beautiful cloister and other fine Gothic buildings. The latter constitute what is known as the Merveille, because they are supported on the north by a marvelous series of buttresses rising off the face of the cliff. (See Plates XI, XII.)

From the thirteenth century onward many structures of pointed-arch design also came to be raised in Aquitaine, Toulouse, Spain, and Italy. The south, however, remained generally loyal to its native Romanesque, and there the Gothic style was essentially a foreign importation. In this connection it will be sufficient to name the cathedrals of Burgos and Toledo as good examples of Spanish Gothic—characterized by heavy masonry and rather excessive ornamentation, much of it inspired by Moorish example. To the Italians Gothic art was largely a system of decoration, marked by gables, pinnacles, and pointed openings. Occasionally, as in the great church of St. Francis at Assisi, the structural features of the northern style were used to good effect. More commonly the Italian architects seem to have striven for effect rather than sound construction. They, for instance, were very fond of bold arches tied together with iron rods instead of being buttressed with stone. Their overindulgence in pseudo-Gothic embellishments served to produce a violent reaction toward classic forms in the subsequent period.

Southern  
Gothic

For this reason, apparently, many books have asserted that Gothic art was Teutonic in spirit. It was just as Teutonic as Paris. In Germany there was very little Gothic construction before 1300, and what there was merely followed French models. In some cases, as at Worms, a rib-and-panel vault was placed over a purely Romanesque nave; in others a large portion of the church was built in the perfected Gothic style. At Strasbourg the result was pleasing; but the pretentious cathedral of Cologne, which was not finished till the nineteenth century, is generally felt to lack the refinement of true beauty. On the whole, German Romanesque, with all its plainness, is artistically superior to German imitations and adaptations of Gothic. For an architectural

German  
Gothic



development approaching the French in originality and charm we must turn to England.

English  
Gothic

As already noted, the Normans, in the years following their epoch-making conquest, covered their island kingdom with great Romanesque churches. Then, in the second half of the twelfth century, the older architecture was superseded by the new style known as Early English—though whether it was any more English than the preceding Norman style is at least a debatable point. In any case, the chief characteristic of Early English is its pointed design, originally introduced as a mere variation in the shape of the arch, quite devoid of structural significance. The first important work to be based throughout on pointed-arch construction was that carried out at Canterbury in the years following 1174. The architect was from Sens and the portion of the church which he rebuilt strikingly resembles the cathedral in his home town, being therefore of the type known on the continent as transitional. Not long afterwards Bishop Hugh of Avallon, a Burgundian, began the reconstruction of Lincoln Cathedral, which may be taken as a fine example of early Gothic in England (see Plate VII).

Lincoln  
Cathedral

At Lincoln many features which are obviously French are combined with many others that are not. Among the latter may be noted the peculiar form of the vaults, which are provided with many extra ribs and paneled in a way unknown on the continent. Although the vaults are supported by flying buttresses, the walls are heavier than those of contemporary French cathedrals, and groups of small lancet windows are found instead of wide openings extending from pier to pier. The whole church is low and long, rather than short and high. The original design included a single-aisled nave, two transepts, an eastern apse, and two square towers on the west. But eventually a square eastern end was substituted for the apse and a screen-like façade was erected to mask the bases of the western towers. The great central tower was added in the fifteenth century. As it now stands, Lincoln Cathedral displays a considerable variety in its parts, yet the total effect of the church, nobly situated on the crest of a steep hill, is magnificent. And in spite of its many peculiarities, it is obviously Gothic in structure as well as in decorative pattern.

The same cannot, without redefinition of terms, be said of all contemporary churches in England, for many of them continued

to exhibit the fundamental traits of Romanesque construction. So Wells Cathedral, while employing the pointed arch throughout, depends for its stability on massive walls and piers, thus avoiding the use of flying buttresses altogether. Aside from the form of the arcade, it is substantially like the cathedral of Durham, where a rib-and-panel vault was placed over a purely Romanesque nave. To a large degree this is also true even of Salisbury Cathedral, which was built as a whole—except for the central spire—between 1220 and 1258, and may thus be taken as a symmetrical expression of the Early English ideal. Here again, although we find Gothic arches and vaults, the latter are supported by massive walls some six feet thick, so that the buttresses placed under the low aisle roofs serve no useful purpose. Under such conditions one would expect a heavy interior; but since the vault is raised to a height of only eighty feet and the workmanship is uniformly excellent, the clerestory is easily held on widely spaced piers of graceful outline (see Plates VII, IX).

Salisbury  
Cathedral

Tastes in architecture, as in other matters, have always varied. To English eyes the cathedral of Salisbury remains more charming than that of Chartres. And since the term Gothic is a late invention—and a mistaken one at that—any one is free to apply it as he chooses. Few, assuredly, will be shocked at hearing the Early English style described as Gothic. But the fact remains that little of it is Gothic in the sense that the cathedrals of Reims and Amiens are Gothic. Such a church as Salisbury, despite its pointed design, is essentially a walled building. According to the French point of view, the purest Gothic in England is to be found in Westminster Abbey, the eastern end of which was erected by Henry III during the years following 1245. Here is to be observed a complete Gothic framework, including only necessary vaulting ribs and an extensive system of flying buttresses. No clerestory walls are left; the entire space from pier to pier is made into window. The vault is the loftiest in England, rising a hundred feet above the pavement. And the principal façade, in this case the end of the north transept, bears a general resemblance to the western façade of Amiens. Nevertheless, the total effect of the church is very distinctive and it is justly regarded as an English monument, rather than a foreign imitation. One is left to marvel that its structural beauty was so little appreciated by subsequent generations.

Westmin-  
ster Abbey

# MEDIÆVAL HISTORY

## 3. THE DECORATIVE ARTS

Architects  
and  
craftsmen

There are, unfortunately, many fascinating subjects in connection with mediæval architecture on which we lack detailed information. No one in the Middle Ages wrote books about the engineering problems involved in the raising of a great church, or about such matters as masonry, carpentering, stone carving, the letting of contracts, and the hiring of men. Occasionally, something may be found out from the chance remarks of a monastic chronicler or a stray record preserved in some cathedral. We know the names of many architects, but little else about them. Although they enjoyed no such personal renown as their successors of the Italian Renaissance, they were equally fine artists—often finer. Like the humbler craftsmen, they were organized in societies or guilds. They learned their profession by actual work under a master, as an apprentice learned how to weave cloth or to make a silver cup. They had neither textbooks nor academic institutions. Their school was that of experience. They observed what was being done in rival communities and perfected improvements according to the best of their inventive talents. How excellent were those talents has already been seen. The character and attainments of the lesser men engaged in putting up the great churches must be judged in the same way—by the results of their labor.

The  
didactic  
motive in  
mediæval  
art

In studying the sculpture and painting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, two facts should be kept in mind: that these arts were virtually monopolized by the church, and that they were very largely subordinated to architecture. Whatever the genius of the artist, it was devoted to the service of the clergy who paid him; when hired to decorate a cathedral, he could not be expected to produce other than ecclesiastical work. To understand the typical art of the Middle Ages, we must take into account not only the skill of the craftsman, but likewise the ideals of the men who employed him. All the sculpture and painting found in a Gothic church was, to be sure, put there for the sake of adornment; yet much of it was also intended to teach a lesson, since even the illiterate might read the meaning of pictures in stone and glass. So the great cathedral came to be a sort of religious panorama, illustrating for the benefit of the people the truths of revelation and science.

The dominant theme was of course the Christian story—a

magnificent epic embracing past, present, and future. Merely to catalogue the favorite subjects of the mediæval sculptor would occupy a page of print. Here it will be sufficient to indicate what may be observed on the outside of one or two churches. The western façade of Amiens, for example, is in every way typical of the best composition. Between the doors of the central portal stands Christ (the famous *Beau Dieu*), with rows of apostles and prophets on either side, and above is the Last Judgment. The left-hand portal (i.e., the one on Christ's right) is dedicated to the Virgin, representing especially her death and coronation. The right-hand portal, by a similar group of carvings, celebrates St. Firmin, patron of the cathedral. In addition, each of the great arches is decorated with tiers of sculptured angels, saints, and other figures. On the jambs of the doors are the wise and the foolish virgins. Below the principal statues runs a double series of reliefs depicting virtues and vices, months, signs of the zodiac, and similar subjects. And over all, extending from tower to tower, is the majestic gallery of kings—not those of France, but those of Judah, the ancestors of Christ.

The façade  
of Amiens

Much the same system of decoration was applied to the western fronts of various other churches. At Chartres, on the other hand, the main façade was a relic of an older building, and to make up for its relative plainness the local clergy added in the thirteenth century the two marvelous porches of the north and south transepts. About the three western portals may yet be seen the original twelfth-century sculpture: at the center Christ in glory, on the right the Ascension, on the left the Virgin and Child, with other scenes from their lives represented in subordinate carvings; also the twenty-four elders, the arts and sciences, the months, and a gallery of kings (see Plate X). But this entire composition is rendered comparatively insignificant by the rich decoration of the north and south portals, devoted respectively to the Old and the New Dispensations. The former alone has been reported to contain over seven hundred individual figures. To mention only some of the principal subjects, we here find the Creation, Samuel, David, Solomon, Job, Samson, Esther, Judith, Gideon, Tobit, the patriarchs and the prophets, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the death and coronation of the Virgin, the Synagogue and the Church, the heavenly beatitudes, the arts and sciences, the months and signs, the wise and the foolish virgins, and the battle of the virtues and vices. And in the south

The  
porches of  
Chartres

porch are shown Christ and the apostles, the Last Judgment, the nine orders of angels, and the lives of many saints, including St. Stephen, St. Martin, St. Nicholas, St. Theodore, and St. George.

Symbolic art To make a complete enumeration of such sculptures, however, would be merely to touch the subject, for each of them is likely to embody an ancient religious and artistic tradition that requires lengthy explanation. The complicated problem of origins cannot here be considered; it need only be said that from very early times Christian art, like Christian thought, had been deeply tinged with symbolism, and that many of the decorative themes on the Gothic church were taken from Romanesque or Byzantine sources. A good example is the representation of Christ surrounded by the four beasts of the Apocalypse, which may be seen over the main portal of Chartres and of Saint Trophime at Arles (see Plate V). These winged beasts—as explained in *Revelation*, iv, 6-8—had the heads respectively of a man, an eagle, a lion, and a calf. According to mediæval interpretation, they typified the four evangelists. The calf was St. Luke, because he begins his gospel with the sacrifice of Zacharias. The lion was St. Mark, whose gospel opens with “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” The eagle was St. John, for he introduces us at once to Divinity, as the eagle, by repute, was the only bird that could look the sun in the face. The man, finally, was St. Matthew, whose first chapter gives the descent of Christ according to the flesh. Furthermore, as Christ had taken on human form, the man represented the Incarnation; the calf, being the sacrificial beast, the Crucifixion; the lion, the Resurrection, because that animal was alleged to restore his cubs to life by roaring at them; and the eagle, flying into the sun, the Ascension.

To understand most of the figure sculpture on a mediæval cathedral, one has to know the conventional symbols with which it is expressed. A plain nimbus marks a saint; one with a superimposed cross denotes God. Wavy lines are water; curved lines with zigzags in between are the sky. A stalk with a few leaves is a tree or a forest. A battlemented tower is a city; if an angel peers from it, it is heaven. Doll-like figures in the fold of a benevolent-looking man's robe are souls reposing in Abraham's bosom, that is to say, enjoying the state of blessedness. Hell is designated by a monster's yawning mouth into which devils with pitchforks cast the souls of the damned. The apostles and many of the saints are pictured in peculiar ways, so that they may easily be recognized

Holy men frequently stand on symbolic objects or persons—such as the kings who persecuted them.

In this connection may be cited a famous example. Below the Christ on the main portal of Amiens are various sculptures illustrating the text: "Thou shalt tread upon the adder and the basilisk; the lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot."<sup>3</sup> Immediately under Christ's feet in the statue are in fact a lion and a dragon, here taken to symbolize the Antichrist and Satan. And a little lower on the shaft are two other beasts. The first, half cock and half serpent, is the basilisk or cockatrice, a fabled monster that could kill by a glance and so typified death. The second is a long-legged dragon which holds one ear to the ground and

*Le Beau  
Dieu of  
Amiens*



FIGURE 17.—THE BASILISK AND THE ADDER (AMIENS CATHEDRAL).  
(From E. Mâle, *L'Art Religieux du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle en France*.)

stops the other with the tip of his tail. This is the adder, which was said to follow such a plan to avoid being charmed by singing and so to embody the willfulness of the sinner (see Figure 17). The entire composition therefore constitutes an eloquent sermon in stone: here at the very entrance stands the Savior proclaiming the victory of the church over sin and death.

Work of this sort obviously followed designs dictated by the ecclesiastical authorities. The sculptor commissioned to represent a cockatrice or the mouth of hell could not go beyond the traditional concepts. In such allegorical pictures as the Last Judgment, consequently, we should not expect to find realistic art. Greater scope was allowed the artist in the execution of individual statues; yet even here his finished product had to conform not only to the spiritual ideals of the church, but to the architectural demands of the structure that he was set to decorate. The skill with

*Gothic  
statuary*

<sup>3</sup> This is the reading of the Vulgate: *Psalms*, xc, 13.

which the Gothic statuary of the thirteenth century was made to observe these prerequisites, and at the same time be intrinsically beautiful, is one of the world's great artistic triumphs. To appreciate this fact, it is of course necessary to study the originals, or at least good photographs. If that is done, the absurd legend preserved in older books, that mediæval art is stiff and lifeless, will be at once dispelled.

The twelfth-century sculpture that adorns the façade of Chartres is distinctly primitive in many respects, but it marks an enormous advance over that of Vézelay. The statues placed beside the main portals are elongated like columns and resemble in their complete rigidity the figures of Byzantine mosaic. Yet each of the faces in the gallery of kings is distinct, and some of them are extraordinarily handsome (see Plate X). This, we may say, is the sculpture of the transition; that of the perfected Gothic has lost all its archaic stiffness and is characterized throughout by charming ease and grace. The principal statues become lifelike from head to foot. To gain this effect the artist had, of course, to take his details from living men and women, from their clothes and from the other things that they used. The result of his work, however, was not to depict a single ordinary person. He produced an ideal portrait of the man Jesus, who was also God; or of the Virgin Mary, who was the Mother of God. A saint could be more plainly human, but after all he had to have a visible saintly quality. It is the exquisite blending of realistic detail with the idealism of the church that distinguishes Gothic sculpture from the work of every other age.

Master-  
pieces of  
Gothic  
sculpture

Among the masterpieces of this art must ever be ranked the impressive Christ of Amiens and the equally famous St. Firmin on the façade of the same church, St. Theodore of the south porch at Chartres, the queenly Virgin of the north transept at Paris, and at least a half-dozen of the major statues at Reims. Here stands the irresistible smiling angel of the Annunciation, which should be compared with the smiling Virgin of Amiens. And here are the marvelous draped figures of Mary and Elizabeth, which are almost Athenian in their dignity and grace (see Plate XI). For serene loveliness, in fact, the Virgin of the Salutation is quite incomparable. Worthy of the highest praise are also the minor sculptures of Reims—compositions in which the artist was allowed almost entire freedom of execution. So in the illustrations of Old Testament history we find vivid pictures of contemporary

life in France; Abraham, for example, is the perfect mail-clad knight of the thirteenth century. Capitals and arches are adorned with a wealth of design taken directly from nature—leaves, flowers and fruits from the countryside of Champagne. For architectural decoration some may prefer more conventional patterns, but that in itself the naturalistic art of Reims approaches perfection none can deny. Very obviously, if most Gothic sculpture was as yet subordinated to the demands of ecclesiastical architecture, it was not because the sculptors lacked the skill for other kinds of work. (See Plate XI—decorative details.)

With regard to mediæval painting there is less to be said. We know that color was liberally applied in many Romanesque churches, but except for faint vestiges, none of the original decoration survives. Figure painting was employed in the older structures to cover the flat wall surfaces, and the designs appear to have been largely inspired by Byzantine art. In the Gothic building these surfaces largely disappeared, and with them the opportunity for large pictorial compositions. In thirteenth-century France, therefore, the art of the painter, aside from the application of solid color to architectural details, was mainly restricted to the illumination of manuscripts and the production of stained glass. Although much charming work was done in the former of these fields, it continued, like handwriting, to follow traditional conventions of the Carolingian age and remained associated with monastic learning rather than the world of the secular craftsman. In glass-making, on the other hand, we encounter an art that was developed in the twelfth century alongside Gothic sculpture. It was only when the new system of construction had substituted great openings for clerestory walls that artists could be attracted to the designing of ornamental windows.

Mediæval  
painting

Of their labor nothing is known except the results. Virtually the oldest bits of stained glass that survive are in Suger's abbey of Saint-Denis. Then come the glorious windows of Chartres. Nothing finer than these has ever been produced, for in spite of all recent technological inventions, mediæval glass remains the despair of the modern artist. Although later generations made enormous progress in painting on plaster or canvas, they produced inferior windows. The success of the thirteenth-century craftsman in this respect was, for one thing, due to the fact that he never attempted to disguise his window. That architectural feature can hardly be other than a flat, translucent surface. It offers

Stained  
glass



no opportunity for realistic art, much less for perspective drawing. The men of the Middle Ages gained their effect by the crudest of designs. Their figures were outlined by the strips of lead in which the pieces of glass were set, and for this glass only solid colors were used, with details of face or costume indicated by the scantiest of pencil touches. And since the glass was applied in thin sheets, the tint could be gradually deepened by adding to the number of sheets.

Entire windows were often made by combinations of plain colored glass in geometrical designs, set off by stone tracery. This was done especially in the case of the great rose window placed in the western façade to catch the rays of the setting sun. The principal windows of aisle and nave, however, were commonly devoted to the portrayal of religious lessons—the lives of the saints or stories from the Bible. In such connections we find the most graphic examples of symbolic art. Episodes from the Old and New Testaments are placed in pairs to show the harmony of the Scriptures obtained through allegorical interpretation.<sup>10</sup> Fabulous animals like the unicorn and the salamander, because of their mystic symbolism, stand in close association with scenes depicting the life of Christ. A stained-glass window, like a carved portal, became a chapter of popular faith as well as a thing of beauty.

French preeminence in mediæval architecture as a whole has often been disputed, for many critics continue to prefer a Romanesque or semi-Romanesque style to the logically perfected Gothic of the Île de France. But in the decorative arts French preeminence throughout the age of the crusades is unquestioned. In this field the combined achievements of the other western countries—though they produced many beautiful works—are not in a class with the glories of Chartres and Amiens and Reims.

French  
leadership  
in the arts

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 428.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE HEIGHT OF THE CHURCH: SOCIETY AND CULTURE

#### I. THIRTEENTH-CENTURY SOCIETY

WESTERN Europe made an astounding advance in civilization during the twelfth century—an advance hard to match in any similar period of time before or since. When the curious historian tries to imagine how it came about, he finds the subject too complex to admit of easy explanation. There is, in fact, no simple formula by which we can account for all the rich and varied accomplishments of Latin Christendom in the age of the crusades. The crusades themselves may by no means be held chiefly responsible, for we have seen that they constituted only one phase of a greater movement. The contemporary religious, intellectual, and artistic revival may likewise be recognized as a symptom of improvement, not its impelling cause. The progress of monarchical government appears to have followed, rather than to have preceded, a general social reinvigoration. Without the economic recovery of the eleventh century, neither the political system nor the culture of the later centuries would have been possible.

Social  
change  
and the  
growth of  
culture

It is, for example, easy to perceive that the great cathedrals could not have been erected without the wealth of the bourgeoisie, and that the funds by which the kings and princes built up their new administrative systems were largely drawn from the same source. The towns became centers not merely of business enterprise on an unprecedented scale, but of university education and of new movements in thought and letters generally. By the opening of the thirteenth century, European culture was predominantly urban, and this characteristic became more and more clearly marked in the subsequent period. It is surely more than coincidence that the civilization of the ancient world persisted, despite the Arab conquest, in just those regions where city life continued unbroken, whereas in the west it decayed with the cities, and with them was reborn. In the light of these facts, can we not say that what we recognize as a high culture is the accompaniment of a flourishing commerce? Yet, even if this statement be accepted, it remains a vague explanation. For who can say with assurance

precisely why commerce revived when it did, or how such an economic factor interacted with others to produce the known results?

The weakening of the manorial system

We may, at any rate, be certain that the commercial revival of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was of vast importance not only for the town-dwelling class, but for the peasantry and the aristocracy. The rapid growth of the mercantile population created an unprecedented demand for food and raw materials, which led to a great extension of agricultural production. To develop the new lands, they had to be colonized with free settlers and such enterprises, unlike the old manorial establishments, were deliberately undertaken for the sake of profit, depending on the sale of produce in the open market. So it was learned by experience that, in favored localities, a lord might advantageously free his serfs, commute their services into money, and rent his inland to farmers or cultivate it by hired labor. The advance of cash economy was rendering obsolete the agrarian institutions of the Dark Age.

The same changes, of course, made it easier for the villein to improve his condition, either by substituting money payments for servile obligations or by running away. The thirteenth century witnessed the establishment of countless new villages and towns, in any of which the settler was normally assured complete liberty. The peasant, whether legally free or not, found avenues of escape opening on all sides; so proprietors found it increasingly necessary, as a minimum, to limit their more arbitrary exactions.<sup>1</sup> *Mainmorte* and *formariage* were reduced to nominal sums, unrestricted *corvée* was abolished, and tallage was made into a fixed annual payment. It was sometimes provided that peasants could not be fined above a certain amount for any ordinary offense. Other privileges, which had long been enjoyed by all bourgeois, were now extended into many rural communities. In these ways the economic status of the peasantry was gradually improved, but in the thirteenth century the process was only getting under way. Except in very advanced regions, like Flanders and Italy, serfdom was still the rule throughout the countryside. It will therefore be better to leave the breakdown of the manorial system for detailed consideration in a subsequent chapter.

Feudalism, too, remained a powerful influence upon the life of

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 264 f. For other factors that were beginning to be felt, see below, pp. 631 f.

the European world, contributing a variety of customs to such widely separated countries as Ireland, Spain, Sicily, Palestine, Greece, the Slavic borderlands of Germany, and the Scandinavian north. Yet even in France and England, where the system had been most completely developed, it was clearly weakening under the pressure of new economic forces. We have seen that the practice of granting fiefs to secure various forms of service had developed at a time when wealth was almost exclusively in land. As soon as the service could be readily paid for in money, feudal tenure became actually unnecessary, lingering on as a form of law or as a traditional mark of gentility. By the opening of the thirteenth century feudal relationship had already lost much of its personal character and was tending to be a mere business arrangement. Hospitality was regularly commuted into an annual payment. The knight's fee, land owing the service of one knight, could be divided into halves, quarters, eighths, and even sixteenths—a partition that of course depended on the substitution of cash equivalents. Feudal aids and subsidies were turned into pretexts for seigniorial taxation. A maze of legal technicalities came to obscure the simple fundamentals of the primitive system.

For example, the essence of vassalage was originally the personal loyalty of a man to a single lord, and the fief was a quite subordinate factor. Subsequently, as one man might accumulate a dozen fiefs and for them owe homage to as many lords, how could he remain a Roland at heart? Lawyers, it is true, invented the saving distinction of liege homage, by which the claims of the chief lord were recognized as paramount; but by this time the spirit of ancient feudalism was dead. Chivalry, under such conditions, became more and more of an aristocratic affectation, overlaid with the *courtoisie* of the fashionable romance. At the opening of the twelfth century *adoubement*<sup>2</sup> was still the barbarian custom of giving arms to the noble youth who had proved his manhood on the field of battle. By the end of the thirteenth it had been made into an elaborate ceremonial—half mystic sacrament, conforming to the religious ideals of the church, and half courtly pageant, to delight the eyes of high-born ladies. The further decline of feudal institutions in the succeeding period served merely to intensify the passion for chivalrous display.

As far as warfare was concerned, no striking innovations were

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 258.

## Warfare

made before the closing years of the thirteenth century. Until then the great armies of western Europe continued to be thoroughly feudal. The knight still fought in the old way, using the weapons of his ancestors. Often, too, his defensive armor remained essentially unchanged, consisting mainly of a steel cap and a hauberk. But the warrior's body was now likely to be more completely covered by the extension of mail over his arms and legs, and by the addition of a great helmet fitted with a visor that could be pulled up over his face. His trappings, furthermore, became increasingly gorgeous. In the course of the twelfth century knights generally had adopted the custom of identifying themselves by painting heraldic devices on their shields. Each noble family came to be recognized by a particular coat of arms, the details of which could be modified to designate the individual member. In the thirteenth century, the feudal gentleman commonly placed the same prideful decoration on the back of a surcoat which he wore over his hauberk—one evidence of the luxurious tastes that were everywhere increasing the financial burdens of the landlord class.

## The castle

A more significant development took place in the domain of military architecture. Since feudal warfare continued to be the same in fundamentals, the castle retained its ancient strategic importance, but it was no longer a primitive structure of earth and wood.<sup>3</sup> In the twelfth century palisades and blockhouses had everywhere been replaced by walls and keeps of solid masonry. The keep, or donjon, when it came to be erected in stone, was at first a square tower placed against one side of the wall that enclosed the bailey (see Plate XII). Along the top of this wall ran a parapet, behind which a continuous walk provided advantageous positions for the defenders. Outside was a moat, normally filled with water, across which a drawbridge could be let down from a massive stone gatehouse. Such a fortress was an enormous improvement over the eleventh-century castle, and yet it proved to be vulnerable in many respects. Experience on the crusades taught men the use of battering-rams, catapults, and other siege engines, which were found to be particularly effective when directed against square corners. Accordingly, in the thirteenth century the castle came to be designed without them.

The old distinctions of motte and bailey and of wall and keep

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 260.

were now abandoned. The castle became an integrated structure, no part of which could be reached without exposing the besiegers to a flanking counter-attack. Rounded towers and bastions were placed at intervals along the walls to command every threatened section. Even if an enemy, by means of scaling-ladders, took one portion, it could be entirely isolated from the rest. And eventually a system of concentric walls was devised to give the defenders a tremendous advantage over any attacking force. Such a castle—of which Kerak in Syria (see Plate XII) is the best surviving example—was virtually impregnable to a feudal army. Beyond starving its garrison into submission, nothing could be done with it until the invention of cannon in the fourteenth century rendered obsolete all traditional methods of fortification.

Turning now to the bourgeoisie, we find that class continuing the rapid progress which had begun over a century earlier—a progress which implied, first, the creation of new urban communities and, secondly, the growth of old ones in population, wealth, and privilege. Although the number of *villes neuves*<sup>4</sup> was enormously increased throughout western Europe, practically all the famous towns of Italy, Spain, France, and England had emerged by 1200. The northeast witnessed the most significant advance in this connection, for there the thirteenth century brought the foundation of Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Rostock, Stralsund, Danzig, Königsberg, Riga, and many other cities which later combined to form the great Teutonic Hansa.<sup>5</sup> As Wales, Scotland, and Ireland had previously taken their urban models from Norman England, so now the Slavic and the Scandinavian countries took theirs from Germany. And comparison of municipal charters proves that, from one border to the other, elementary bourgeois liberties were very much the same.

*Villes  
Neuves*

These liberties have been analyzed in an earlier chapter; here it need only be remarked that they remained fundamental for the town-dwelling population of Europe, largely contributing to the social heritage of modern times. Besides, as noted above, they more and more came to affect the status of the peasantry. The customs of small towns like Lorris, Beaumont-en-Argonne, and Prisches were extended in the thirteenth century to scores of tiny rural communities. Groups of villages in the neighborhood of Laon were organized into communes patterned after that turbu-

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 354.

<sup>5</sup> See below, pp. 585 f.

lent city. From evidence of this kind many writers have asserted that the mediæval town was developed out of a preexisting village community. Such an argument reverses the testimony of the sources, for we hear of no rural communes until similar organizations had flourished in urban centers for over a hundred years, and the separate privileges enjoyed by peasants in the later Middle Ages had long before appeared as bourgeois liberties. Sometimes the founder of a *ville neuve* evidently hoped, by the concession of special franchises, to induce the growth of a real city on his estates. In many cases, however, the intention of the patron could hardly have gone beyond the encouragement of agriculture through the setting up of a local produce exchange.

Municipal  
constitu-  
tions

It is harder to generalize concerning the older towns, for by the thirteenth century their constitutions had come to vary widely. The communes of northern Italy, some of which will be dealt with individually in later chapters, were now sovereign republics in all but name. In Germany, too, the failure of the central authority eventually gave equal independence to the free cities—those holding directly of the empire. On the other hand, the towns subject to the various territorial princes had to be satisfied, like those of the western monarchies, with lesser autonomy. The boroughs of England never enjoyed more than limited rights of self-government under close royal supervision. The same held true of the Norman communes under their old dynasty, and when they were taken over by the Capetians, the system—typified by the *Établissements* of Rouen—was continued and extended to many other towns. The French kings, indeed, consciously strove to reduce all the great cities of their domain to more complete subordination. Many a northern commune, which had acted very much as it pleased during the feudal disorders of the earlier period, lost all independence in the thirteenth century and came under the rule of agents appointed by the crown. But in Flanders the towns advanced from one victory to another. Through sheer force of their wealth they came to dominate the whole county both economically and politically—a situation which, as will be explained below, was largely responsible for the outbreak of the so-called Hundred Years' War.

We have seen that, in the twelfth century, the autonomous municipality was normally governed by a group of elected magistrates bearing a variety of titles. By the thirteenth century this single board had commonly been divided into a series of courts and

councils, at the head of which stood one principal official. So the typical Italian commune came to be ruled by a *podesta*, frequently a foreigner installed by rival factions as a means of avoiding civil conflict. In German regions the chief magistrate was generally styled *Bürgermeister*, in French regions *maire*. And it was through French influence that the mayoralty became usual in the greater English boroughs. The fashion was started by London, which took advantage of Richard's absence on the crusade to regain the self-government lost under Henry II. Henceforth the city was administered by a mayor and a board of aldermen elected by the citizens in local districts called wards—a form of municipal constitution which was eventually imported to our country as one of the established customs of England.

It should be noted, however, that many towns continued to prosper without a mayor or equivalent officer; and that, whether they had one or not, local affairs were normally controlled by the wealthier citizens—the men who in the earlier period had often been united in a gild merchant. Now, in the thirteenth century, the gild merchant had generally been superseded by a series of craft gilds, each of which included persons engaged only in one trade—such as weavers, fullers, dyers, chandlers, butchers, millers, bakers, shoemakers, goldsmiths, and the like. The essence of the gild's power lay in its official monopoly of a particular industry, which enabled it to exclude outside competition and to prescribe elaborate rules governing production. According to the universal practice, a boy entering the profession first had to serve as apprentice for a number of years, during which he got nothing beyond board and lodging. Having learned the trade, he became a journeyman, i.e., a man working by the day (French *journée*); and such he remained until he had saved enough to start a business establishment of his own. Meanwhile, to be ranked as a master, he commonly had to submit a masterpiece—a product of his labor to meet the standards of the gild.

In those trades which catered only to the local market it was thus possible for a man to start at the bottom and work his way to the top. But the number of masters who could make a living was necessarily proportionate to the population of the town, and when the worker had reached the height of his profession he would still, to our eyes, be a very small dealer. On the street particularly devoted to the members of his craft he owned or rented a little shop. There he not only produced his wares but also sold them by

Craft gilds

Little  
business  
and big  
business



retail. And there, in the projecting upper stories, he lived with his family, probably housing his apprentices in attic rooms. Except through a fortunate marriage or inheritance, he would be held to strict equality with his fellows; for the gild system, by its intensely conservative regulations, discouraged all individual enterprise for the sake of unorthodox gain. In the greater industries organized for export trade, on the contrary, the masters were little more than hired artisans. Although they worked in their own homes, they used materials, and often tools as well, which were furnished by the wholesalers. Between these two groups the social cleavage tended to be absolute, and it was destined to be the source of much political disorder in the subsequent age.

Capital-  
istic  
enterprise

In the leading cities of the thirteenth century we may therefore distinguish three prominent classes: first, a nondescript mass of laborers, including apprentices and journeymen; second, small business men, principally masters in the gilds; and third, big business men, engaged in capitalistic undertakings on a large scale. A detailed account of this last subject is out of the question in the present connection, but a few hints may serve to illustrate its complexity. Men in the Middle Ages seem to have acquired capital as they do at present—through savings or earnings of various sorts. Having acquired it, the more venturesome might then, as now, gain relatively enormous wealth by judicious investment. One opportunity was already urban real estate, for, as noted above, the physical expansion of the mediæval towns rapidly converted arable and waste into building lots which could be leased to individual bourgeois at a handsome profit. We know from excellent sources that many a *ville neuve* was made possible by shrewd merchants who supplied the necessary capital for the foundation, and who recouped themselves by securing advantageous locations about the new market place.

With the growth of the textile industry in Flanders, many men came to put their money into contracts for English wool. The wool was made into cloth by local weavers, hired at so much the piece; and the cloth, finally, was sold by the contractor for export to all the regions of Europe. Others, similarly, were wholesalers of oriental and Italian products—a trade which involved the entire shipping business of the Mediterranean. We have ample proof that, even before 1200, capitalists of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice were accustomed to finance commercial voyages across the sea. Shares in boats and cargoes would often be dis-

tributed among a group of speculators, so that all would bear an equal risk. And there were already underwriters engaged in the selling of marine insurance. From such enterprises were built up the fortunes not merely of the merchants proper, but likewise of the great nobles whose palaces adorned the streets of the Italian cities. Although the gentleman might look with disdain upon the shopkeeper, he by no means scorned the wealth that only trade could bring him.

These instances should make it evident that thirteenth-century business rested upon a well-developed use of both money and credit. It has already been remarked that no coin was minted in western Europe during the Carolingian period except the silver penny (*denarius*). So the shilling, the mark, and the pound remained mere units of weighed money, and the only gold pieces in circulation were of Byzantine<sup>6</sup> or Arabic origin. This system, obviously, was altogether insufficient for the expanding commerce of the later period—especially as continuous debasement had gradually turned the silver coinage into bronze. Then, just before the end of the twelfth century, Venice led the way toward a monetary restoration by minting a penny of fine silver worth twelve of the old ones. This was called a big penny (*denarius grossus*), and in the next century such coins—particularly the *gros tournois*<sup>7</sup> of France and the sterling of England<sup>8</sup>—came to have wide circulation all through the northwest. By that time, too, the coining of gold was resumed by the great Italian republics, as famous names still bear witness, for the ducat was named after the duchy (*ducatus*) of Venice and the florin after Florence.

Monetary  
develop-  
ments

From the subject of money we are naturally introduced to that of banking, in which the Italians, for reasons already seen, led the western world. The simplest transaction of this sort was money-changing; and it was also the oldest, for time out of mind travelers had been compelled to convert the currency of one region into that of another. Where trade was most active, men quickly came to specialize in such business, from which they were easily drawn into credit operations of various sorts. Suppose, for example, that A of Genoa sold spices to B of Flanders, while C of Genoa bought cloth from D of Flanders. By canceling B's debt

Banking

<sup>6</sup> Hence the name *bezant* applied to such a coin. See above, p. 355.

<sup>7</sup> That is to say, the penny of Tours. Cf. the German *Groschen*.

<sup>8</sup> This was the name given to an improved silver penny. The derivation is doubtful, but it was not from *Easterling*.

against C's, the actual transfer of cash would be reduced to a minimum. And if agents of the leading importers and exporters met at regular intervals for a mutual balancing of accounts, the result would be what we know as a clearing house. That function, among others, was fulfilled by the mediæval fairs—especially, in the thirteenth century, by the fairs of Champagne, a yearly cycle of six great assemblies for the wholesale distribution of goods, held at Troyes, Provins, and other towns of the vicinity.

At such periodical centers of trade, and in all the more important cities, the banking firms of Italy—indiscriminately called Lombards—came to have permanent representatives. Through them financial operations in any region of Europe, or in almost any country of the Mediterranean, might be readily carried out. A crusader, for instance, could buy a letter of credit on a Syrian port and so avoid the trouble and danger of transporting his cash; a pope could send funds to his legate in Dublin; an extravagant king could pay by draft for a new set of crown jewels from Constantinople. And despite the prohibition of usury by the church,<sup>9</sup> the Lombards and other bankers did a flourishing business in money-lending. Both lay and ecclesiastical princes were in the habit of anticipating their revenues by loans, the ordinary country gentleman was generally forced to borrow whenever faced by any unusual expense, and bourgeois constantly needed extra capital in connection with their various enterprises. What could not be frankly admitted was concealed under legal fictions. Interest was disguised as damages, payments for imaginary services, or rents. As always happens, economic necessity made short work of an inconvenient morality, and sooner or later the law was modified to fit the facts.

The Jews Among the money-lenders of the Middle Ages were many Jews, but their importance in the financial history of Europe has often been exaggerated. Since the Carolingian period, when Jews were very prominent in what little trade persisted between Moslem and Christian countries, the situation had been radically changed. The big business of the thirteenth century was not in their hands. At that time their operations were rather of a local character, being generally restricted to the more backward regions where banking was not monopolized by the great Christian firms.

<sup>9</sup> Following *Deuteronomy*, xxiii, 19, and *Luke*, vi, 35.

In such parts the Jews, as long as they were useful to the princes who had authorized their settlement, enjoyed a precarious security; but they were herded into particular quarters of the towns, forced to wear a distinctive garb, and periodically stripped of all their earnings. Not infrequently, in fact, a combination of debtors would join in buying from the protecting government a cancellation of their notes; so the unfortunate lender, in order to anticipate the eventual loss of his principal, had to charge an exorbitant rate of interest. At best the Jews were merely tolerated, and every now and then religious hatred, fanned by economic rivalry, would lead to savage persecution.

Other details concerning the life of the thirteenth century could be added to fill many pages. This discussion, however, must be closed with a warning against overestimating the size of mediæval towns. Except Venice and one or two of its chief Italian rivals, no western city of that age could possibly have had 100,000 inhabitants. The foremost Flemish communes, like Ghent and Bruges, had only half as many, and yet they were relatively huge. Even London, with about 25,000, was far above the average, for an ordinary town would contain a population of from 5000 to 10,000. Judged by modern standards, these figures seem ridiculously small, but compared with the urban statistics of the Roman Empire,<sup>10</sup> they are quite respectable. By the thirteenth century western Europe had clearly surpassed whatever prosperity it had enjoyed in ancient times.

The size of  
mediæval  
towns

## 2. THE CHURCH AND ITS ANTAGONISTS

Long before the days of Innocent III, the church had come to be recognized throughout western Europe as an absolute monarchy. To use the language of political science, the pope was sovereign—the ultimate authority in all ecclesiastical matters, legislative, executive, and judicial. Naturally, in administering his vast estate, he appointed a host of agents and advisers, chief among whom were the cardinals.<sup>11</sup> The latter, in particular, were frequently summoned to meet with the pope in consistory—a sort of cabinet to which he was accustomed to submit for discussion all more important questions. Other ministers acted as judges, financial experts, secretaries, and the like, filling the numerous offices that together made up the pope's great central court, or

The papal  
monarchy

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 314.

*curia*. To enforce his decisions, he dispatched on all sides special emissaries called legates, whose authority was superior to that of any local prelate. Normally, of course, each diocese was governed by its own bishop under the supervision of the metropolitan, and from time to time the bishops of a whole province, or of a larger region, would meet in council to legislate on matters of general concern. Their acts, however, could always be set aside by papal decree, just as the ruling of any local court of canon law could be reversed at Rome. Only the judgment of the supreme pontiff was final; against it there was no appeal.

Christian  
doctrine

The theoretical basis of this establishment, the doctrines of the apostolic succession and the Petrine supremacy, have already been considered in some detail.<sup>12</sup> In such respects the later Middle Ages brought no change. Nor were any of the other Christian beliefs modified as to fundamentals, for the great scholastics did little more than systematize and develop the ideas of a much earlier time. The sacramental system, for example, was held to have been inaugurated by Christ Himself; Peter Lombard merely defined the ancient practice of the church by enumerating seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, marriage, holy orders, and extreme unction.<sup>13</sup> Even when Innocent III, in his Lateran Council of 1215, proclaimed the dogma of transubstantiation,<sup>14</sup> he thought to affirm what had always been an article of Christian faith. That faith, it was then agreed, depended not on Biblical texts, but on a continuous tradition which was felt to be under the abiding inspiration of God.

The  
influence  
of the  
church

Whatever may be the attitude of the present-day reader toward such an ideal, no one can doubt that it was a tremendous force in thirteenth-century Europe. For a thousand years the Christian clergy had expressed the noblest aspirations of the Latin world, had constantly tended to dominate its thought and activity. In the light of the facts brought out above, no elaborate argument is needed to prove the importance of ecclesiastical influence for either the political or the cultural history of the Middle Ages. If in imagination we subtract from our concept of mediæval civilization all such factors as the papal power, the conversion of the barbarians, Christian education, literature, and art, what remains

<sup>12</sup> See above, pp. 41, 83.

<sup>13</sup> See above, pp. 80 f. Extreme unction is normally the last sacrament to be received—an anointing with consecrated oil when a man is at the point of death.

<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 420.

of it? Nevertheless, we have to remember that the church controlled much that it did not create. The armies and fleets that made possible the capture of Jerusalem were not in themselves clerical. The fact that a boy learned to read and write in an ecclesiastical school was no assurance that he would produce ecclesiastical books. A cathedral was actually designed by architects and built by skilled workmen, not by the bishop who ordered its construction. And the money with which he bought his materials and hired his labor was amassed principally through contributions from the faithful.

In other words, man-power and talent and wealth were devoted to the service of the church because of its inspiring hold on the minds of the people; its amazing prestige depended solely on spiritual leadership. This it could not afford to risk for the sake of outworn traditions in political or economic fields. Whether the church would do so was a great issue in the thirteenth century. Although it was still the dominant institution of Europe, its supremacy was already threatened in many particulars. Its height of influence was gained only by a bitter struggle against opposing forces. Decried by the orthodox as worldliness, paganism, and heresy, these forces from the theological point of view were indeed as old as Satan. Yet to the student of European history they appear essentially new developments—products of the great social transformation that took place during the age of the crusades. Perhaps the ecclesiastical program was too idealistic ever to be imposed on a materialistic world. Perhaps too many leaders of Christendom yielded to unworthy ambitions. These remain matters of controversy. At any rate, every person interested in the origins of modern civilization must realize that the central problem of his inquiry lies in the rise and decline of the mediæval church.

The political phases of this problem will be taken up in the next chapter; here we are concerned with more purely religious questions and their bearing on literature and learning. One of the most striking developments of the twelfth century was that of secular poetry, both in Latin and in the vernacular. Much of it is at most non-religious in character, but some of it, as has been indicated, is strongly anti-clerical. The Goliardic literature, in particular, includes a considerable volume of irreverent burlesque and satire. Although most of such unconventional works remain anonymous, we know that the class of wandering scholars merged

Anti-clerical literature

into that of the *jongleurs*, who produced many of the *fabliaux*.<sup>15</sup> These tales, with their scurrilous lampooning of priests and monks, were obviously gross exaggerations; yet the fact that the portrayal of clerical vice and hypocrisy was always good for a laugh in the market place is a clear indication of the popular attitude. And the literary current started by the *fabliaux* continued to run stronger and deeper in the succeeding age.

The  
Romance  
of the Rose

One of the most remarkable and influential books of the Middle Ages was the *Romance of the Rose*, completed in the later thirteenth century by Jean de Meun, a bourgeois educated in the University of Paris. As left by Guillaume de Lorris,<sup>16</sup> the poem is a rather insipid allegory of courtly love, but in the hands of Jean de Meun it is turned into a diatribe against all the follies of mankind. The plot is entirely subordinated to a series of philosophical speeches, in the course of which the author shows himself a keen observer of the contemporary world, as well as an ardent reader of the classics. Caring nothing for convention, he speaks his mind on all subjects. His mordant satire strikes all the great and respected—kings and courtiers, priests and monks, lawyers and doctors, lords and ladies. Neither birth nor authority nor wealth nor a reputation for holiness is sacred in his eyes; each must justify itself by something more than tradition. In over 18,000 lines of flowing verse Jean de Meun is able to disapprove of almost everything. Yet the vials of his wrath are especially reserved for two subjects. On women he quotes Juvenal with relish, adding a bitter invective of his own; and against the clergy he levels a damning indictment, denouncing high and low for avarice, pride, sloth, and general worthlessness. True saints, he says, are more likely to be found among laymen than in the habit of religion.

The Wal-  
densians

With the *Romance of the Rose* the spirit of the *fabliaux* appeared in serious vernacular literature. It was a scandalous book which had a great success, becoming a sort of Bible for radicals throughout the next two centuries. Yet, in attacking the clergy, Jean de Meun was not heretical, for he denied no article of Christian faith. Others, meanwhile, had not been so moderate. Being likewise disgusted with the clergy, and caring more for practical religion than for philosophy, they had been led to break with the church altogether. The most famous of such heretical leaders

<sup>15</sup> See above, p. 465.

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 464.

in the twelfth century was Peter Waldo (Pierre Valdo), a well-to-do merchant of Lyons. It was about 1170 that Waldo, inspired by the precepts of the Gospel, devoted all his wealth to charity and organized a group of Poor Men to engage in Christian work among the people. Although the original project was approved by Pope Alexander III, Waldo was soon embroiled with the local clergy. He and his Poor Men were accused of unauthorized preaching in the course of which, by means of a Provençal translation, they interpreted the New Testament to suit themselves. So in 1179 the pope ordered Waldo to submit to episcopal authority. He refused, saying that he must obey God rather than man.

The upshot was the formal excommunication of the Waldensians in 1184. Driven from Lyons, they became a proscribed sect, and under these circumstances their heresy inevitably became more pronounced. In self-defense they revived the Donatist<sup>17</sup> assertion that the validity of a sacrament depended on the character of the minister, and established their own forms of worship without an ordained clergy. Like the later Protestants, they tended to discard everything not specifically ordained in the New Testament, thus denying transubstantiation and a number of other dogmas. For a time their missionary zeal was prodigious. Spreading into southern France, Spain, Italy, and the Rhinelands, they merged with various local groups of ecclesiastical rebels, such as the converts recently made by Arnold of Brescia.<sup>18</sup> Yet they never suffered any systematic persecution. Even their opponents admitted that, despite their erroneous views, they were pious folk of pure morals—rather unobjectionable as compared with the pestilential heretics against whom the church was then waging a merciless campaign.

Utterly distinct from the Waldensian heresy, which resulted from a reforming movement inside the western church, was that of the Cathari.<sup>19</sup> The origin of this sect has been much disputed, but scholars are now pretty well agreed that it came into Europe from the east. There, thanks to the paralysis of the Byzantine Empire and the toleration of the Mohammedans, all sorts of heterodox opinions tended to be indefinitely perpetuated by small groups of adherents—such as Nestorians, Jacobites, Manichæans,

The Albigensians

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 398.

<sup>19</sup> Literally, the Pure.



and Paulicians.<sup>20</sup> From Asia Minor and Thrace what would seem to have been a mixture of the two latter heresies spread into Bulgaria, where it became firmly established by the tenth century. Thence it was presumably brought by traders into Latin Christendom, appearing before the end of the eleventh century in the towns of Italy, Provence, and Languedoc. Especially in the last-named region Catharism gained such rapid headway that by the time of Innocent III the heretics had generally become known as Albigensians, from the city of Albi in the county of Toulouse.

The advance of the sect was obviously due in large measure to dissatisfaction with the Christian clergy. The Albigensians particularly boasted that, without a richly endowed clergy, they could attain to a higher standard of morals than was dreamed of by the Catholics. In part, however, the success of their missionary efforts may be explained by the fact that, like the Gnostics<sup>21</sup> of the third century, they maintained two disciplines: one for the ordinary man and one for the perfected. The latter was pledged to rigid asceticism, including celibacy and a vegetarian diet. The former had only to revere his betters until, at the last moment, he might be fully initiated and so die in purity. Any one who thus ended his life was assured of paradise. The soul of one who did not was doomed to inhabit a lower animal, for, according to the Albigensians, there was neither a hell nor a purgatory. In the absence of a strong central authority, their theology varied somewhat from one congregation to another, but in general it was based, like that of the Manichæans, on a sharp dualism of spirit and matter, light and darkness, good and evil.

By the close of the thirteenth century the heresy had attained such proportions in southern France that the ordinary agencies of the church were powerless to combat it. Most of the local clergy were suspect, and the efforts of papal investigators and missionaries broke down before the indifference or hostility of the princes. The latter, in truth, could hardly be other than friendly to the religion cherished by a large proportion of their subjects, including the majority of wealthy townsmen. And a semi-pagan nobleman might himself find the double standard of Catharism very agreeable, in that it offered a comparatively easy road to salvation. Innocent III, as usual, acted circumspectly

Proclama-  
tion of the  
Albigen-  
sian  
Crusade  
(1208)

<sup>20</sup> See above, pp. 86, 101, 112, 180.

<sup>21</sup> See above, p. 39.

in this matter; but in 1208 the murder of his legate at the court of Raymond VI, count of Toulouse, precipitated a crisis. Declaring Raymond excommunicate and deprived of his county, Innocent offered the lands and goods of his heretical subjects to any Christian warriors who would enlist in the sacred cause.

This was the famous Albigensian Crusade, the political results of which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. As far as heresy was concerned, the pope's holy war was unquestionably effective. The Albigensian cause, together with the prosperity and culture of Languedoc, fell in ruin. Innocent's successors were left merely the task of stamping out the remnants of dissent by means of the new judicial process known as the Inquisition.

### 3. THE CHURCH AND REFORM

Even the most skeptical of critics will admit that the advance of the papacy during the eight centuries between Leo the Great and Innocent III was a development of prime importance for the world, and that it was in large measure due to the moral grandeur and good sense of the popes themselves. Theirs, really, was the inheritance of the Cæsars, for they, rather than the barbarian emperors, displayed a truly Roman statesmanship. Especially in matters of faith and worship the papacy inevitably held to a moderate course that would prove acceptable to the vast majority. This policy, it may be readily perceived, was necessitated by the fact that the church was not a voluntary association of zealous believers, but a catholic institution to which millions of persons were subjected by public law. Most of them were inclined to be no more devout than was absolutely required. To hold them, the church had to popularize its practices in ways that the more spiritually minded would perhaps find unedifying. In mitigation of this danger an alternative had long been offered to those who demanded a loftier and more rigorous Christianity: to be truly religious, one might leave the world and enter a monastery. Down to the thirteenth century, therefore, every major reform of Christian life emanated from the cloister.

The  
papacy  
and mo-  
nasticism

With a practical genius that was typically Roman, Gregory the Great had used his influence to make the Benedictine system the standard of monasticism throughout the west. Such it still remained in the time of Innocent III, for both the Cluniac and the Cistercian movements had sought, though by different methods, to achieve the same result—a return to the original discipline of

St. Benedict.<sup>22</sup> Now, however, Europe had undergone a great social transformation. In the new environment it was possible that the ideals and practices of an earlier age would no longer suffice. Ecclesiastical organization had been perfected to suit the needs of an agrarian society; urban populations, rapidly growing outside that organization and living a life utterly foreign to its traditions, might well find themselves misunderstood and neglected. It is surely significant that the anti-clerical agitation of the later Middle Ages was largely of bourgeois origin. So too was the greatest contemporary revival of religion.

St. Francis  
of Assisi  
(d. 1226)

Between heresy and sainthood the gulf is normally thought of as wide and deep. Yet Peter Waldo of Lyons and Francis of Assisi began their public careers in almost identical fashion. The boy whom his companions knew as Francesco apparently owed his name to the fact that his father was a cloth merchant constantly engaged in journeys to and from the great fairs of France. Thence, at any rate, came the romantic literature of chivalry, which was to have a great influence on the life of Italy's most popular saint. For many years, however, Francis was distinguished as a leader of fashion rather than of religion—a gilded youth of luxurious tastes and fastidious ways. Disliking his father's business, he became a soldier. He was captured in the course of a local war, and while in prison experienced a severe illness. Then, on his return home, a series of incidents revealed a change in his character. Instead of avoiding lepers, he suddenly began to give them personal care. He renounced all his wealth and dressed himself as a hermit. Being convinced that, while praying, he had received a divine command to "repair my house, which is everywhere falling into ruins," he began, with a few other volunteers, to rebuild various ruined churches in the neighborhood of Assisi.

It was not until he chanced to hear the reading of Christ's commission to the apostles that the true purport of his call became clear to him.

And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See above, pp. 306 f., 427.

<sup>23</sup> *Matthew*, x, 7-10.

This message Francis took literally. Henceforth he devoted himself to absolute poverty, traveling barefoot from place to place and living by charity, while he preached the Gospel and ministered to the sick and the needy. Soon he was joined by a small band of followers, the nucleus of what quickly became a world-wide organization, for the success of the movement was immediate. Especially in the towns, where the church had lamentably failed to satisfy the wants—either physical or moral—of the people, the Franciscans caused a sensation. Here were men who, by example as well as by words, revived the simple faith which Jesus had inspired in His disciples.

Francis called himself and his followers the Friars Minor, that is to say, the Lesser Brothers. It was indeed as a kindly brother that he treated every one, including the meanest outcasts of society. He loved the animals, the birds, the bees; he had a sympathetic tribute even for "brother worm." In the flowers and the grass and the trees—in all nature—he found a keen and reverent delight. And in gratitude he wrote hymns of praise to God, employing not the language of formal worship, but the Italian vernacular. One of these songs, fortunately, has come down to us. In it he thanks the good Lord for brother sun who lights the day; for sister moon and the stars; for brother wind and sister water and brother fire, so gay and strong; for mother earth who sustains us by her fruits; and lastly, for sister death. To say that Francis was the troubadour of religion is no mere figure of speech. He would sometimes, says Thomas of Celano,<sup>24</sup> hold a stick over his left arm like a viol, and with another for a bow pretend to play upon it, all the while singing a joyous French song about the Lord.

This was the spirit of the Franciscan revival in the freshness of its youth and enthusiasm, and it brought to the masses a Christianity such as they could never learn from a princely bishop or a monkish recluse. Yet how the new movement could be brought into harmony with the existing system of ecclesiastical government was a problem. Happily for the church, it was at that moment headed by an eminent statesman. Innocent III, appreciating the opportunity that lay before the papacy, was careful to guide, rather than to antagonize, the reforming energy of the friars. They were at once authorized to maintain their desired poverty,

The  
Franciscan  
order

<sup>24</sup> The earliest and best source for the life of St. Francis.

not merely as individuals but as a group, and to preach repentance. Then, with the success of the Franciscan enterprise throughout the west, the growth of the order compelled the establishment, under papal control, of an elaborate constitution. Administrative provinces were created, with a hierarchy of officials extending upward to a minister-general, elected by a great central chapter that met every three years. And a semi-monastic rule took the place of the few Gospel precepts that had sufficed for the original band of friars. Long before he died in 1226, Francis had ceased to direct the order as a whole, and inside another generation the Franciscans had come to stand for much that he would hardly have approved.

St.  
Dominic  
and the  
Domin-  
icans

Before proceeding with this subject, however, we must turn to the foundation of the Dominican order. The man whose name was to be thus perpetuated was a Spaniard, a dozen years or so older than Francis of Assisi. While the latter was still following his youthful profession, Dominic, as a well-educated clergyman, had been drawn into controversy with the Albigensians of Toulouse. Through actual experience, he became convinced that no headway could be made against the heretics until orthodox missionaries could match the zeal and austerity of their best opponents. So, with a few companions, he devoted himself to a life of poverty and preaching. In 1215 the project was formally sanctioned by Innocent III and shortly afterwards, as Dominic's order came to be extended into many countries, he adopted for it a constitution modeled after that of the Franciscans, but with a much more fully developed system of representative government.

The friars  
in the later  
thirteenth  
century

By the second quarter of the thirteenth century two great orders of mendicants (literally beggars) had thus appeared: the Friars Minor, popularly known as Minorites, Grey Friars, or Cordeliers; and the Friars Preachers, called Black Friars or (in Paris) Jacobins. Both groups were pledged to absolute poverty and were by origin entirely distinct from monastic organizations. Yet practical necessity had already produced a modification of the earlier discipline. Although the friars could not own houses or churches, such buildings were readily provided for their use by wealthy patrons. Some communities even came, by virtue of legal fictions, to enjoy the revenues from permanent endowments and so to live a life far removed from "apostolic poverty." Nevertheless, the work of the friars continued to be primarily in the world; they were not bound to remain within monastic

walls. One of their chief occupations was always preaching, to which was added by papal authorization the power of hearing confessions and granting absolution. And despite the complaints of the parish clergy, the mendicants proved so popular, and so useful to the papacy, that their power steadily increased throughout the thirteenth century. What a force the Franciscans had become in Latin Christendom may be judged from the fact that by 1260 they are said on good authority to have numbered between twenty and thirty thousand. The Dominicans never enrolled so many recruits, but, on account of their preeminence in learning, they also came to exert a tremendous influence.

Dominic, we have seen, began his career as a preacher against the Albigensians; so it was natural that his order should be intimately associated with the beginnings of the Inquisition. At the time of Innocent III there was, of course, no thought of tolerating heresy, which had been a crime at civil law for over eight hundred years.<sup>25</sup> As yet, however, the Christian states of the west had never agreed on a suitable penalty, and the church itself could inflict no punishment involving death or mutilation. Prosecution was still governed by the ordinary rules of the canon law: trials to be held in open court, the defendant to be confronted by his accusers, only certain kinds of evidence to be admitted, and the like. Such procedure, though adequate when heretics were almost unheard of, completely broke down when they filled the countryside. Accordingly, it was decreed by various ecclesiastical councils that the bishops should, through their own efforts and through the appointment of special investigators, strive to detect all suspects and bring them to justice. At the same time civil governments were induced to stiffen their laws in defense of the orthodox faith. Innocent III pointed out that heresy was really treason to God, implying that so hideous a crime deserved a worse punishment than the betrayal of a temporal prince. Accordingly, death by burning was prescribed for heretics in most states before the end of the thirteenth century.

The Dominicans and the campaign against heresy

Meanwhile the popes had developed special tribunals to complete the work of the Albigensian Crusade. In this connection Dominicans had long been employed as agents and investigators under the local bishops. Now, in 1233, Gregory IX<sup>26</sup> gave the friars independent authority to hear and determine cases of heresy

The papal Inquisition

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> See below, pp. 531 f.

in southern France, with the right to call upon the bishops for all necessary cooperation. Thus inaugurated, the system was rapidly extended until nearly all regions of Latin Christendom were allotted to one or the other of the mendicant orders as the judicial agents of the Apostolic See. The new papal courts were entirely removed from the restrictions of the canon law. Their procedure was inquisitorial, in that the judges themselves sought out and prosecuted suspects. Trials were held in secret. The defendant was not faced by his accusers and he was not permitted an advocate. In theory, torture could only be applied once and any confession thereby obtained had to be verified by the accused while under no compulsion. Actually, the inquisitors set the law at naught by "continuing" the first torture until the desired confession was secured. Yet their primary object was to win converts, not to produce victims.

For incurring suspicion of heresy, or for in any way aiding heretics, various degrees of penance were imposed. One who confessed and recanted might be subjected at most to imprisonment for life. The convicted heretic who remained obdurate, or who relapsed into his previous error, was "relinquished to the secular arm" for punishment under the civil law. And although this was done with the request that he escape "the effusion of blood and the peril of death," every one expected the normal penalty of burning to be carried out. In extenuation of such practices little can be said except that the church should not be blamed for the faults of the entire age. The Inquisition did not extend into Scandinavia or the British Isles, and in those countries where it did operate only a very small percentage of heresy suspects were sent to the stake. Relatively, heretics were treated no more cruelly than other criminals. Nor were secular princes generally less intolerant than the clergy. They even welcomed a goodly number of victims, since conviction for heresy, as for treason, carried with it the forfeiture of all property. Armies of knights and mobs of lesser folk proved by their acts that they were even less merciful than the law.

From the standpoint of effective government, at any rate, the Inquisition was highly successful. Thanks to it, the papacy was able to eradicate the Albigensian heresy in the south of Europe. And thanks to the zeal of the mendicant orders in other ways, schismatic movements like that of the Waldensians, while persisting in isolated regions, ceased to be formidable. Meanwhile,

too, the friars, especially the Dominicans, had proved invaluable to the Roman church in combating all hostile tendencies in the universities. Those organizations, as already remarked, had been produced by the intellectual revival of the twelfth century. Alongside the standard texts of the Carolingian age there was now a library of new translations from the Greek and the Arabic. Aristotle's more advanced essays on logic had been readily combined with the traditional teachings of the schools. But more recently his scientific and philosophical books had been introduced in Latin versions, together with commentaries by Moslem scholars, including the great work of Averroës.<sup>27</sup> Under his influence, various doctors of Paris developed heretical ideas, and, when they were charged with so doing, replied that, although they accepted the authority of the church in matters of faith, intellectually they remained free to believe what they chose. Such a view, if permitted to triumph, would have made a farce of all ecclesiastical influence on education.

Perceiving that much of the Aristotelian metaphysic, as it had always been interpreted, was diametrically opposed to Christian doctrine, the popes at first tried to exclude the obnoxious books from the university curriculum. On all sides, however, students insisted on reading the whole of Aristotle, and by the middle of the thirteenth century the papacy, with its characteristic practicality, had found another solution for the problem. This was, through the labor of devout scholars, to bring all the great texts of antiquity into harmony with the orthodox faith—a task for which the Dominican friars, because of their devotion both to learning and to authority, were peculiarly fitted. In all the university centers they maintained houses with resident masters, to whom were sent for instruction the best of the students trained in their many secondary schools. To Paris, naturally, came the most promising of their theologians, and from among the latter emerged the three greatest encyclopædists of the thirteenth century: Vincent of Beauvais, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas.

The first named was essentially a compiler who, about the middle of the century, produced a tremendous book of 9885 chapters, called *Speculum Maius* (The Greater Mirror). In its three parts—the mirrors of nature, of doctrine, and of history—it

Vincent of  
Beauvais  
and Albert  
the Great

<sup>27</sup> See above, p. 208.



covers the whole realm of contemporary knowledge, but is more remarkable for its comprehensive plan than for the quality of its thought. As a philosopher, Vincent was far surpassed by Albert the Great, a German, who in 1245 became the principal master of the Dominicans at Paris. There he gained renown both as a teacher and as a writer of monumental books, chiefly a *Summa Theologiæ*<sup>28</sup> which in the latest edition fills thirty-eight quarto volumes. The essence of this huge work is the interpretation of Aristotle in the light of Christian truth—an extension of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* to include all the learning that had been recovered since the publication of the earlier text. Albert's composition, however, was obviously lacking in symmetry and coherence. It was left for his pupil, the Italian Thomas Aquinas, to write the definitive work on scholastic theology.

St.  
Thomas  
Aquinas

The *Summa Theologiæ* of Thomas Aquinas, whether or not one agrees with the author's conclusions, is an intellectual effort of the first magnitude. Its purpose is to expound and reconcile the truths of reason and the truths of revelation. The latter, of course, Aquinas finds in the authoritative precepts of the church; the former he accepts as best set forth in the philosophy of Aristotle. The two must agree, for truth is truth; we cannot hold one conviction on rationalistic principles and the opposite on faith. As long, in fact, as the believer in traditional Christianity is unwilling to abandon all reliance on reason, he must arrive at some such compromise as that of the great Dominican. Obviously, the work of Thomas Aquinas was quite in line with the established principles of the Roman church; his triumph in the field of academic instruction was also that of the papacy. So it is not surprising that he was canonized and eventually accorded equal honor with the four earlier Doctors of Latin Christianity;<sup>29</sup> or that, in 1879, Pope Leo XIII formally made his *Summa* the basis of all theological study in Catholic institutions.

The  
Franciscan  
opposition

Nevertheless, in the thirteenth century there was no unanimity with regard to the writings of St. Thomas. The increasing power of the Dominicans in the universities was bitterly opposed by the rest of the masters. Especially at Paris the faculties, on this score, offered stout resistance to the popes, sometimes forcing them to moderate their demands. In the meantime, too, the anti-Dominican cause received vigorous support from Oxford.

<sup>28</sup> That is to say, a summation or compendium of theology.

<sup>29</sup> See above, p. 97.

There, despite the fact that St. Francis had deprecated book-learning, it was the Friars Minor who became the great intellectual leaders, and they could be counted on to oppose their professional rivals in all lawful ways. As the Dominican doctors became ardent Aristotelians, the Franciscan doctors eloquently defended the Platonic traditions of St. Augustine. They even attacked the whole scholastic program of education on the ground that it placed an exaggerated value on deductive argumentation and ignored the true importance of mathematics and experimental science. At one time it was customary to give the entire credit for this opinion to Roger Bacon; now it is beginning to be understood that the original exponent of the ideas was more properly Robert Grosseteste.

An English boy of humble birth, Grosseteste (i.e., Greathead) rose through sheer ability to be chief lecturer of the Franciscans at Oxford, chancellor of the university, and finally (1235-53) bishop of Lincoln. Though necessarily proficient as a theologian, he revealed a dominant interest in natural science by writings on astronomy, chronology, physics, and optics. He had a thorough knowledge of Greek and at least a smattering of Hebrew. These accomplishments and predilections he passed on to his famous pupil, Roger Bacon (d. 1292), who developed them in ways that have held a great fascination for scientists of the modern age. In his own day, however, Bacon's influence was slight, being much less than that of his illustrious master. For one thing, he seems to have been a chronic trouble-maker. He not only leveled virulent attacks against Albert the Great and Aquinas, in which personal jealousy was not inconspicuous, but also antagonized the rulers of his own order, by whom he is said to have been imprisoned for a number of years. For this reason he has been hailed by imaginative writers as a martyr of science, and through the alleged discovery of cipher messages in mysterious manuscripts he has been accredited with all sorts of impossible inventions.

Robert  
Grosseteste and  
Roger  
Bacon

Actually, Bacon was a rather obscure friar who devoted some remarkable works to a criticism of contemporary education. Although he never dreamed of dethroning theology as the queen of the sciences, or of questioning the authority of the church, he insisted that the schools should study their leading texts in the original languages, and that they should correct their teaching by placing greater emphasis on mathematics and experimentation.

Bacon himself was neither a great mathematician nor a great scientist, but he had read widely and thought deeply on all sorts of problems. He clearly saw the need of original investigation and predicted marvelous results if only scholars would profit by his suggestions. They refused to do so, and, as a consequence, university education remained thoroughly scholastic for many generations. And when the reaction came, it was inspired by men who followed the antiquarian tradition of the grammarians. The humanist, as we shall see, had even less use than the theologian for utilitarian science.

The final  
synthesis  
of the  
scholastics

Seen in historical perspective, the period from Abélard to Aquinas is characterized by a great intellectual advance on the part of the western European peoples. This advance, beginning under the auspices of a church that monopolized education, was necessarily guided by ecclesiastical interests and it culminated in the system of instruction and study that we know as scholasticism. By the close of the thirteenth century all the accepted authorities of the schools, pagan as well as Christian, had been brought into rationalistic unity by devout scholars, of whom the most eminent was Thomas Aquinas. The day has long passed when all of their deductions, particularly in the realm of natural science, may be accepted as definitive. Yet for grandeur of design and perfection of detail the edifice which they raised has few equals in the history of thought. That it could provide a fit theme for one of the world's finest epics will be realized when we come to examine the career of one Dante Alighieri.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE HEIGHT OF THE CHURCH: POLITICS

#### I. THE FOURTH CRUSADE AND ITS PRELIMINARIES

THE victory won by the original crusade was primarily due to two factors: the success of the papacy in uniting the Christians of the west for the sake of a holy war and the failure of the Mohammedans to make common cause against them. During the twelfth century this situation tended to be reversed. While a new Turkish power gained control of both Syria and Egypt, the crusading zeal of the westerners threatened to disappear before the advance of political and commercial ambitions. From the beginning, practical considerations had dominated the action of those leaders who intended to establish themselves permanently in Palestine. As rulers of conquered territories, they became rivals of one another as well as of their Moslem neighbors. The Italian merchants, having gained control of the Syrian ports, continued to think more of economic advantage than of altruistic projects in the name of Christianity. And few of the resident Franks—as all crusaders were called in the east—had any love for the freshly arrived pilgrims. The latter were scandalized by the peace-loving, tolerant ways of the former and constantly accused them of obstructing the holy undertakings of the church. The local princes were indeed inclined to deprecate the fanaticism of the newcomers; yet without the aid of such recruits, the maintenance of the Christian conquests would have been utterly impossible.

The  
weakening  
of the  
crusading  
movement

It was fortunate for all concerned that efficient organizations were at hand to assume the leadership in matters of defense. These were the great military orders, composed of knights who had bound themselves by monastic vows to the service of the Cross. The Knights of St. John, or Hospitallers, originated in the eleventh century as a band of men pledged to care for sick pilgrims. The Knights Templars, on the other hand, were founded about 1120 as a fighting unit, and shortly afterwards the Hospitallers adopted a similar constitution. Each group was governed by a Grand Master resident in the Holy Land, where the principal body of knights was stationed. But subordinate

The  
military  
orders

officials were quickly established in all the principal countries of western Europe, to enlist members and in every way to further crusading interests. Both orders received extensive privileges and accumulated valuable properties on all sides. They even tended, by widespread banking operations, to become a power in the world of business.

The  
Second  
Crusade  
(1147-49)

On the side of the Turks, in the meantime, a new turn was given to events by the rise of Zangi, governor of Mosul under the theoretical sovereignty of the Seljuk sultan. Having gained control of Aleppo and other Moslem cities in northern Syria, he shocked all Christendom in 1144 by overwhelming the county of Edessa, the northernmost of the Latin states. The result was the great expedition preached by St. Bernard and known in history as the Second Crusade. As already noted, it was a complete failure.<sup>1</sup> Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany were separately defeated in Asia Minor, and when they went home, the situation was worse than before. Up to this time the crusading cause had been greatly favored by the hostility to Zangi of two other princes: the governor of Damascus and the Fatimite caliph of Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Now, as the incapacity of the European kings was advertised to all, a series of unwise Christian attacks tended to bring all three Moslem powers into an irresistible combination.

The union  
of Egypt  
and Syria  
under  
Saladin  
(d. 1193)

Zangi, it is true, was murdered in 1146; but the work which he had begun was ably continued by his son. Nur-ed-Din, by taking Damascus, assured his control of all Syria behind the crusaders' positions, and not long afterwards he had the satisfaction of seeing the nephew of his best general become virtual ruler of Egypt. This nephew was the famous Saladin (Sala-ud-Din), revered as a saintly hero by all Moslems and honored by the Christians as a cultured, chivalrous antagonist. Thanks to Nur-ed-Din's diplomacy, he first became vizier to the Egyptian caliph. Then, when the latter died, Saladin restored that country to the orthodox caliph at Bagdad and thereby won the title of sultan. Nur-ed-Din, meanwhile, had been succeeded by an incompetent son; but in the course of a few years the latter was supplanted by the new Egyptian sultan, who thenceforth held undisputed sway in Mosul, Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo. Under

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 375, 398.

<sup>2</sup> A dynasty claiming descent from Fatima and Ali had been established in Egypt during the tenth century; see above, p. 203.

his inspiring leadership, the Mohammedan cause in Asia regained something of its old-time ardor. The Christians, outnumbered and divided among themselves, could oppose no effective resistance. Jerusalem fell in 1187 and within another year nothing was left of the crusaders' conquests except three isolated positions: Tyre, Tripolis, and Antioch.

Having, with complete indifference, allowed affairs in the east to reach this desperate stage, the foremost kings of western Christendom now joined in another magnificent but ill-concerted enterprise.<sup>3</sup> Frederick Barbarossa's host was exhausted by fighting its way through Asia Minor even before the emperor's death ended all hope of its accomplishing anything significant. The kings of England and France, when they finally arrived, failed to cooperate in any way. Richard Lion-Heart, it is true, delivered the final blow in the recapture of Acre and won a number of victories against Saladin in the field. Yet, when a three-years' truce was signed in the autumn of 1192, the Christians had to be satisfied with a guarantee of free access to the Holy City under toleration of its Moslem rulers—a concession that might well have been gained without bloodshed. As far as its avowed object was concerned, the Third Crusade was a failure. It is interesting, not because it revived the spirit of 1095, but for the opposite reason.

The Third  
Crusade  
(1189-92)

By 1189, obviously, the crusade had ceased to be a feudal enterprise inspired and guided by the papacy. Any great European offensive now had to be a joint campaign undertaken by the great kings. They were normally preoccupied with domestic politics. To induce them to take the cross at all required enormous pressure from the clergy, strongly backed by public opinion. And since each then did exactly as he pleased, it is not surprising that their final achievement was so meager. Of the three outstanding participants, only Richard obtained noteworthy success, and his victories were due rather to a passion for war and adventure than to any consistent policy, religious or otherwise. As it turned out, the most lasting result of the Third Crusade was the accidental creation of a Latin kingdom in Cyprus. Richard, on his way to Palestine, quarreled with the Greek governor of the island and took it away from him. Later it was ceded to Guy of Lusignan, a French adventurer who had been defeated in a contest for

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 387, 405.

the crown of Jerusalem, and his family continued to reign as kings of Cyprus for almost three hundred years.

The origin  
of the  
Fourth  
Crusade

The close of the twelfth century brought no important change to the situation in the east. Saladin died in 1193, leaving to his brother the combined territories of Egypt and Syria. The Christians, thanks to the sea power of the Italian cities, maintained their precarious positions along the coast. Philip Augustus became involved in a furious struggle with Richard and then John of England. Henry VI momentarily united the kingdoms of Germany, Arles, Italy, and Sicily, but died before he could launch his project for an imperial crusade to the eastward. Then, as all Europe was drawn into the war of Guelf against Hohenstaufen, and of Angevin against Capetian, Innocent III became pope. An ecclesiastical statesman of his genius would not allow the sacred cause of the Holy Sepulcher to be forgotten by Latin Christendom. The very fact that all the great kings were engaged in fighting one another provided an opportunity to revive the crusade as a papal undertaking. So Innocent, while trying to dictate terms of peace to the warring princes, fervently exhorted all Christians to renew their devotion to the neglected ideals of Urban II.

Ville-  
hardouin

In 1199 a group of French knights, headed by Thibaut III, count of Champagne, took the cross. The project received the enthusiastic support of Innocent and by 1201 had advanced far enough to warrant the making of final arrangements. Since it was agreed that the expedition should go by sea, certain men were delegated to make a contract with the Venetians for the necessary food and transportation. Among them was Geoffroy de Villehardouin, who has left us a vivid description of the events that ensued. Aside from what he tells us himself—and it is restricted to matter-of-fact references in the third person—little is known of him. As marshal of Champagne, Villehardouin was from the outset prominent in the crusading host, and, having lived through famous adventures, saw fit to write them down in his own vernacular. His book, therefore, is doubly remarkable—as the oldest monument of French prose literature and as a historical source. On the first count Villehardouin's memoirs set a high standard in a form of composition for which his countrymen have since remained illustrious. His narrative is clear and simple, entirely free from the rhetorical affectation that is so characteristic of contemporary work in Latin. For the same reason,

obviously, it is invaluable as an eyewitness account of the Fourth Crusade. But Villehardouin is charmingly naïve; the story as he tells it has no touch of irony. The present-day historian has to be more sophisticated. Behind the scenes depicted by Villehardouin he finds a moving force unsuspected by that honest crusader.

This fact will become apparent with the unfolding of the tale, which at the opening is plain and straightforward. With regard to the projected crusade, Villehardouin and his associates approached the Venetians, who, after deliberation, made the following proposal. They would transport the army—at least 4500 knights, 4500 horses, 9000 squires, and 20,000 foot soldiers—and provide it with supplies for nine months at the rate of two marks per man and four marks per horse. And “for the love of God” they would add fifty armed galleys, on condition only that they should receive one-half of all conquests and of all booty to be won by sea or by land. These terms were accepted by the crusaders and sworn to by both parties. But when the host assembled at Venice in the summer of 1202, it was discovered that less than half of the sum due the Venetians had been collected. Even after the wealthier and more generous barons had contributed all they had, 34,000 marks were still lacking.

The taking  
of Zara  
(1202)

Meanwhile dissension had broken out over the immediate destination: although the leaders had decided to strike first at Cairo, many of the lesser folk wanted to go straight to Syria. Neither plan was destined to be carried out, for the Venetians now made another proposal. They would forgive the debt still owed them if the host would help them to regain the city of Zara, of which the Hungarian king had recently deprived them. The crusaders, not knowing what else to do, agreed; and, as if by miracle, a wave of pious enthusiasm swept the maritime republic—to which, assuredly, a crusade was no great novelty. Villehardouin tells how great-hearted Henry Dandolo, the blind doge, had a cross sewed on the front of his hat, while “a great multitude” of Venetians took the pilgrim’s vow along with him. This determination persisted in the face of direct commands from Innocent III, who pointed out that Zara was a Christian city and that the Hungarian king was a vassal of the Apostolic See. In November, Europe was given the interesting spectacle of a crusade launched by men under papal excommunication, for the expedition crossed the Adriatic to Zara and took it after a five days’ siege.



The  
Byzantine  
project

This, as it happened, was merely the introduction to "one of the greatest marvels and most wonderful adventures" in all history: most of the pilgrims were to see neither Egypt nor the Holy Land; instead they were to capture the city of Constantinople. The result was no accident; it was too logical a fulfillment of ambitions that were already old in the days of Urban II. Robert Guiscard, self-made ruler of southern Italy, had anticipated the crusade by a deliberate attempt to conquer the Byzantine Empire.<sup>4</sup> The project was interrupted by Guiscard's death, but remained constantly before the minds of his successors throughout the twelfth century. Only the constant danger of attack from the German emperors kept the Sicilian kings from more consistent efforts in the Balkan peninsula. The same policy passed with the kingdom of Sicily to the Hohenstaufen Henry VI. When he died in 1197, he was in the midst of preparations for a greater crusade, which should have as its preliminary the reduction of Constantinople. Although the might of the Hohenstaufen was now broken and the kingdom of Sicily was in the hands of the pope, another power was willing and anxious to secure Latin dominion of the Greek world. This was the city of Venice.

For the better part of two centuries, the one-time subject of the Byzantine Empire had been steadily advancing at its expense. From the emperor's need of support against the Norman attack the Venetians had secured a commercial preeminence at Constantinople which they threatened to extend into an economic dictatorship. Resistance to such ambitions, shown by hostile acts of the government and by anti-Latin riots in the capital, had merely stiffened the determination of the western republic to protect its interests in every possible way. And recent events could not fail to arouse hopes of successful intervention by force of arms. In 1185, as the result of a violent insurrection, the last of the Comneni<sup>5</sup> was supplanted by one Isaac Angelus, a thoroughly incompetent person who, only ten years later, was blinded and thrown into prison by his brother Alexius. By 1200 anarchy had swept the entire empire. The Serbs and Bulgars, reasserting their independence, overran Thrace and Macedonia. The Turks again pushed forward in Asia Minor. Meanwhile the old antipathy of all crusaders toward the Greeks had been freshly

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 330, 393 f.

<sup>5</sup> The imperial house founded by Alexius Comnenus; see above, p. 330.

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aroused by the experiences of Frederick Barbarossa and Richard Lion-Heart on Byzantine territory.

It may readily be seen why, under these circumstances, the Venetians would welcome the proposal now made by Alexius, son of the deposed Isaac Angelus. This prince had come west to seek aid from his brother-in-law, Philip of Suabia,<sup>6</sup> and even before the expedition had sailed from Venice he was in touch with some of its leaders. What promises, if any, had been made him we do not know; but it is certain that his cause would be favored by Boniface of Montferrat, an ardent Hohenstaufen supporter chosen to command the host on the death of Count Thibaut. At any rate, the crusaders, now encamped before Zara, were told that, if they would rescue the rightful emperor at Constantinople, he would do marvelous things for them. He would, in the first place, restore the east to communion with the Roman church. Secondly, he would assure their conquest of Egypt by the grant of 200,000 marks of silver, of food for the entire army, and of 10,000 men to serve for one year. Lastly, he would, as long as he lived, maintain 500 knights in the conquered country.

The  
diversion  
of the  
crusade

Again dissension broke out in the host. One party, led by the Cistercian monks, insisted on going straight to the Holy Land, but the Venetians and the greater princes—especially the marquis of Montferrat and the counts of Flanders and Blois—favored the Byzantine adventure. And it was the latter group who, despite the pope's express command, carried with them the majority. Only a few insisted on going to Syria, where they accomplished nothing; the rest sailed for Constantinople in the spring of 1203. Having taken Corfu and various Ægean islands on the way, they arrived before the imperial city in June. Then followed the series of dramatic episodes which are so graphically described by Villehardouin. In July the crusaders broke into the harbor and stormed the walls. Alexius III ran away, Isaac was restored, and his son was crowned as Alexius IV. Unfortunately for the crusading cause, however, an outbreak of popular fury then compelled the Latins to take refuge on the Venetian ships; Isaac died, his son was killed, and a rival emperor was installed. By the opening of the year 1204 the host was thus given the choice of abandoning the whole enterprise or of taking Constantinople a second time. They chose the latter alternative and, after one

The cap-  
ture of  
Constantinople  
(1204)

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 408.

repulse, succeeded in scaling the walls on April 12. The newly proclaimed emperor fled, and the capital of the Greek world fell a victim to the savage reprisals of the enraged westerners.

The  
partition  
of the  
empire

Before launching their attack, the crusaders had signed an agreement as to what should be done if they succeeded. Of all the booty one-half should go to the Venetians and one-half to the Franks. Each party, furthermore, should name six men, and these twelve should elect an emperor. Whoever was thus chosen should have one-fourth of all conquered territory; the other three-fourths should be equally divided between the Franks and the Venetians. Now that the victory had been won, this arrangement was faithfully carried out. Baldwin of Flanders was elected emperor and crowned with all due Byzantine pomp. By way of compensation, Boniface of Montferrat was given a large dominion in Macedonia with the title of king, and a Venetian was named patriarch of Constantinople. The other barons of the host, including Villehardouin, were provided with fiefs on the mainland. All the important islands, together with the shores of the Peloponnesus, Gallipoli, and a large section of the capital, were assigned to Venice—enough to assure the republic a commercial monopoly throughout the empire.

The results  
of the  
Fourth  
Crusade

Thus was effected one of the most astonishing revolutions in the political history of Europe. To the men engaged in it the triumph was so immense, and so rich in unforeseen consequences, that they very naturally dropped all thought of an immediate advance against the Turks. Pope Innocent, after denouncing the whole Byzantine adventure, came to hail its unexpected success as an evident miracle to permit the reunion of the Latin and Greek churches. But he by no means favored the abandonment of a further crusade. It was only after years of futile remonstrance and exhortation that he realized the hopelessness of gaining any action at Constantinople and began agitation for an entirely new expedition to rescue the Holy Places. The Fourth Crusade had turned out to be no crusade at all. Its victories, though brilliant, were political and commercial, not religious. No event of the thirteenth century shows more clearly the trend of the time. The true age of the crusades was past.

Nor was the consequent history of the Latin Empire particularly edifying from the papal point of view. Ecclesiastical unity proved impossible of attainment, for the western conquerors were soon embroiled in wars with one another, as well as with the

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Greeks and the Slavs. Various members of the old aristocracy created and maintained independent states, which continued to grow at the expense of the crusaders' establishments. Finally, in 1261, Michael Palæologus, ruler of Nicæa and the adjacent coasts, took Constantinople by a surprise attack and nominally restored the Byzantine Empire. But the Venetians still kept all their more important conquests, and a number of French barons—notably the dukes of Athens and the princes of Achaia—held out in the Balkan peninsula for a long time to come. So it came about that



the ruins of feudal castles may yet be seen in classic Greece as well as in the island of Cyprus and in the deserts of Palestine.

### 2. FREDERICK II

The son of Henry VI and the grandson of Frederick Barba-  
rossa was unescapably a Hohenstaufen, yet few mediæval kings  
were less German than Frederick II. His reign is explicable only  
by the fact that, as the grandson of Roger II, he fell heir to the  
kingdom of Sicily, and with it to the tastes and talents of the  
Hauteville dynasty. In a preceding chapter we have seen how  
Frederick was left an orphan at the age of four and was brought

Descent  
and  
character

up in his native land under the wardship of Innocent III. He never saw Germany until 1211, when he was elected king in opposition to Otto IV.<sup>7</sup> By that time he had been declared of age at Palermo, had been married to Constance of Aragon, and by her had a son, Henry. As an untried youth called into a strange land, he played a cautious game, remaining in all ways submissive to his papal guardian; but this docile exterior concealed a fully matured character. At eighteen Frederick II was a statesman who had already determined the policies on which he was about to embark, a many-sided genius who was soon to astonish the world. Here it will be convenient first to review his political career and then to consider in somewhat greater detail his accomplishments as a legislator, author, scholar, and general innovator.

Frederick  
and Hon-  
orius III  
(1216-27)

To secure Innocent's support in Germany, Frederick was compelled to repeat by formal decree in writing all the promises which Otto had failed to carry out. Besides, Frederick swore that, as soon as he obtained the imperial crown, he would confer upon Prince Henry the full sovereignty of Sicily under the wardship of the papacy. Then, after Innocent had proclaimed a new and greater crusade in the Lateran Council of 1215, Frederick gave his adhesion by personally assuming the cross. Just at that time (1216) Innocent was succeeded by Honorius III, an elderly, benevolent clergyman who, though a good administrator, lacked all talent as a politician. Frederick, therefore, found conditions favorable to the advancement of his own designs, which were by no means those to which he had subscribed. Postponing his crusade by a series of plausible excuses, he conciliated the German princes by the grant of extraordinary privileges and in 1220 secured the election of his son Henry as King. With German affairs disposed of, he returned to Italy. There, through fair words and liberal engagements for the future, he prevailed upon Honorius to confer on him the coveted crown of the empire.

Thus Frederick reversed the procedure which he had sworn to follow. Germany he abandoned to the princes under the theoretical sovereignty of his infant son, while he himself turned to the congenial task of making Italy into an actual monarchy centered in his hereditary kingdom of Sicily. It was this last feature that gave his program its realistic character—that dis-

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 411.

tinguished it from the dreams of Roman Empire which had dazzled his German predecessors. Barbarossa's dominion in Italy could never rest on more than intimidation by an army from beyond the Alps. Frederick II, on the other hand, was himself an Italian, trained since earliest childhood in the finest political school of Europe, the cosmopolitan state of Roger II. He had only to advance from the solid base established by his Norman ancestors and, by extending their approved methods, to annex the remaining provinces of the peninsula. Such a project, of course, would arouse the bitter hostility of the Roman church; yet, as long as the mild Honorius occupied the papal throne, Frederick could proceed with little danger of serious opposition. During the next six years, he was permitted not only to re-establish strong royal control over the Sicilian kingdom, but also to reassert the imperial authority throughout Italy. The pope was even persuaded, for the sake of the crusade, to assist Frederick in securing recognition from the Lombard communes. Meanwhile, on one pretext or another, imperial forces were steadily encroaching on the territory which Innocent had triumphantly brought under papal sovereignty.

Finally, in 1227, Honorius was succeeded by Gregory IX, a very different sort of man. Especially eminent in the field of canon law,<sup>8</sup> Gregory was also conspicuous as a fiery champion of the papal tradition. As pope, he now set himself the task of bringing to terms the young emperor who had been playing fast and loose with the rights of the Apostolic See. Frederick himself realized that in all decency the crusade could no longer be postponed. Besides, he now had a personal interest in the matter, having recently taken for his second wife the heiress of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Accordingly, to anticipate the demands of Gregory, he prepared for embarkation in the autumn of 1227. After sailing, however, he was seized by an epidemic then prevalent in southern Italy. Leaving the army to proceed without him, he returned for medical treatment—conduct for which Gregory at once declared him excommunicate. If he refused to submit, further penalties were threatened.

Gregory IX and Frederick's crusade (1228-29)

Though not wholly inexcusable, the pope's action was overhasty, and it was immediately taken by Frederick as justifying him in adopting an independent course. With a magnificent air

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 431.

of outraged virtue, he issued an appeal to the enlightened opinion of Europe and, still under the ban of the church, sailed for Palestine in June, 1228. There nothing of importance had occurred to change the situation left by the Third Crusade. Papal agitation had recently inspired an attack on Egypt, but it had failed; Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Moslems. On his arrival, Frederick, instead of fighting, resorted to diplomacy. Skillfully taking advantage of the jealousies that had developed among various members of Saladin's house, he was able to secure by treaty what had been the despair of all Latin hosts for the past forty years. The Christians were given possession of the Holy City, together with a strip of territory connecting it with Acre; and in return they merely had to guarantee the local Mohammedans freedom of worship in their two great mosques. In March, 1229, Frederick made a triumphal entry into his regained capital, and there assumed the royal crown. Within a year after his departure from Italy, he was again on the high seas bound for home.

Gregory  
IX and the  
Italian  
war

Such was the astonishing crusade of Frederick II—a crusade which triumphed without a battle, and which was carried out in the face of papal excommunication. The success of the expedition, in fact, merely induced Gregory to renew and amplify his curses. While Frederick was restoring Christian rule in Jerusalem, the pope was absolving his subjects from their oaths of fealty and appealing to Christendom for troops with which to invade and conquer his kingdom. Gregory doubtless could offer good legal arguments to justify his policy, but they could hardly lend it moral grandeur. To the world it must have seemed that the pope was doing precisely what the emperor had earlier been accused of—sacrificing the holy cause of the crusade to Italian politics. Nevertheless, Gregory persisted in his course with the utmost determination and it was not until 1230 that he was prevailed on to grant Frederick absolution. The terms were rather severe: the emperor agreed to restore all the papal territories and also to relinquish various rights which his ancestors had exercised over the clergy of Sicily.

This peace, although hailed as a great ecclesiastical victory, was only a prelude to another extension of the imperial power. Frederick, with his work in the east officially blessed, now resumed his European project where it had been dropped in 1227. It was at this juncture that he published his most famous decrees

for the Sicilian kingdom, reorganizing the administration, economic as well as political, and establishing what amounted to an enlightened despotism. Next he turned to Germany, where the young Henry had been encouraged by Frederick's Italian enemies to raise the standard of revolt. The insurrection was quickly put down; Henry was brought back to Italy, where he died a few years later; Conrad, Frederick's son by his second wife, was installed as king; and the northern country was once more abandoned to the government of the princes. By 1236 all was quiet and Frederick proceeded to deal with the Lombard cities, which had revived the league formed against Barbarossa. Again the issue depended on force of arms, and this time it was the emperor who triumphed, for the communes, led by Milan, went down to crushing defeat at Cortenuova in 1237.

The inevitable result was a fresh crisis with the papacy, for Gregory could not be expected to remain an idle spectator while Frederick made himself dictator of the peninsula. Exchange of violent recriminations was followed by open war, in which the pope allied with the league, and the emperor began the systematic reduction of the Papal States. This project, despite the outbreak of further revolts in Lombardy, was nearing completion when Gregory died in 1241. Frederick naturally sought to turn the situation to his own advantage, and when the cardinals, after long delay, elected a man known as his personal friend, he was delighted. But the new pope assumed the ominous name of Innocent IV (1243-54) and used Frederick's desire for peace merely as a means of gaining time. Then, breaking off all negotiations, he fled to Lyons, where he summoned a great council to consider the emergency confronting the church. So, in 1245, Frederick was again proclaimed excommunicate and deposed from all his offices. The Germans and the Italians were invited to elect a new king, and the pope announced that, in his capacity of feudal lord, he would himself appoint another ruler for Sicily. These acts, to be sure, were not in themselves especially deadly—such fulminations had lost much of their terror. They tended, however, to encourage a fresh lot of conspiracies and revolts on both sides of the Alps. And before Frederick could again establish his mastery, he fell a victim to disease, December, 1250.

Frederick's hope of creating a real Italian kingdom thus remained unfulfilled; yet his reign should not, on that account, be considered a failure. Aside from all imperial ambitions to the



Frederick's  
code for  
Sicily

east and to the west, his achievements as king of Sicily were sufficient to rank him among the world's greatest statesmen. While Gregory IX was formulating the first official code of canon law, Frederick issued his famous *Liber Augustalis*, the finest secular code since the time of Justinian. It included 217 separate constitutions arranged in three books, to which was eventually added a supplement of 61 *novellæ*. As a whole, the work was of course inspired by Roman example; much of it, in fact, was actually produced by the "civilians" of the royal court, notably Piero della Vigna. It was not, however, an academic disquisition, for its substance was drawn from the legislation of Frederick's Norman predecessors. His work was to systematize practices that were already a century old and to define them in the formal language of jurisprudence. If he ruled Sicily as a despot, it was by virtue of the actual authority that he inherited, not because he was able to quote the *Digest*.

Religious  
policy •

For every major feature of Frederick's government precedents had existed under Roger II<sup>9</sup>—for his administrative system, combining feudal tenures with institutions learned from the Greeks and the Arabs; for his monopoly of warfare and military fortification; for his method of detecting and trying criminals; even for his very effective diplomacy. Frederick's religious policy is especially interesting in this same respect. Like the earlier kings of Sicily, he encouraged Christians and non-Christians to live together in peace and harmony, but it would be a mistake to think that he therefore believed in religious toleration on principle. The Jews and the Moslems constituted national units within the state, each marked by distinctive garb and assigned particular territories. Although any one in either of these two groups could lawfully be converted to Christianity, the Christian had no choice. He had to remain scrupulously loyal to the church. If he did not, he was burned as a heretic; in this respect, as in many others, Frederick set a cruel example to the princes of Europe. The limited freedom of worship permitted under his régime resulted from practical necessity, not from beneficent theory.

Economic  
measures

It was, perhaps, in the economic sphere that the preeminence of Frederick's administration was most clearly marked—a feature due to the emperor's intelligent use of Saracen precedents. As part of the governmental reform which he carried out after

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 293.

1220, he abolished all internal tolls throughout his hereditary kingdom and instead inaugurated a state tariff<sup>10</sup> levied only on the frontiers. There he established royal warehouses, to which both importers and exporters had to bring their goods; and there the king's tax had to be paid before anything could be transhipped or resold. By this system of customs duties, known as the *doana*,<sup>11</sup> Frederick not only secured a handsome revenue but also facilitated the laying of an embargo on whatever he pleased. This might be for the sake of war, of diplomatic advantage, or of private gain; for, besides being the greatest landed proprietor of the country, he was a keen business man, always willing to make a handsome profit by turning to advantage his public authority.

Frederick showed his understanding of economic questions in many other ways. He instituted a series of monthly fairs, each held in a different region. He negotiated commercial treaties with the Moslem princes of the African coast. He maintained state monopolies in salt, iron, tar, hemp, and silk, assuring control over what today would be called key industries and notably adding to his income. By experimentation on his own estates and by offering special inducements of various sorts, he sought to improve agriculture and the raising of domestic animals. He was particularly active in introducing the date palm, indigo, sugarcane, cotton, and other oriental plants. His minting of gold *augustales* in 1231 set a useful example for the Italian republics.<sup>12</sup> He encouraged immigration, colonized waste lands, and founded a number of new towns. He was the first prince of Europe to call representatives of the bourgeoisie to meet with the barons and other important persons in his great central courts.<sup>13</sup>

Like his Norman predecessors, Frederick lived in a semi-oriental magnificence that astonished and somewhat shocked his western contemporaries. It was said that, after the fashion of an oriental sultan, he maintained an extensive harem. The story, as repeated by Gregory IX, was undoubtedly exaggerated; but in such matters Frederick was quite frankly a libertine. Another accusation, that he bathed on Sunday, seems to have been well founded! Nor could it be denied that he treated Moslems with great consideration, both inside his dominions and elsewhere;

Frederick's  
tastes and  
habits

<sup>10</sup> From the Arabic *tarif*.

<sup>11</sup> From the Arabic *diwan*; cf. the French *douane*.

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 503.

<sup>13</sup> See below, p. 569.

this was one of the main points emphasized by Gregory in condemning his crusade. Besides, Frederick was alleged to have done all sorts of strange things and to have made all sorts of scandalous remarks. The pope roundly charged him with being a skeptic and a rationalist—a pagan at heart, who feigned orthodoxy for political effect. It would indeed appear that, in spite of the emperor's stringent laws against heretics, these rumors had some basis in fact. Frederick was not a man of childlike faith. The impression that we gain from his own writings, as well as from the testimony of his friends, is that of an intellectual with an absorbing interest in the problems of philosophy and science.

Scientific  
interests

One of the most famous sights afforded by the Sicilian kingdom was that of the emperor's menagerie, which always accompanied his formal journeys from place to place. On such occasions, the people crowded to see a collection of birds and beasts drawn from distant lands—ostriches, parrots, monkeys, leopards, panthers, lions, camels, a giraffe, and lastly the great royal elephant, bearing a howdah filled with Saracen troops. Before such marvels even visiting statesmen were struck with awe. But Frederick's motive in maintaining the establishment was not merely to advertise his magnificence; he was deeply and sincerely interested in zoology. The proof is his own book *On the Art of Hunting with Birds*. The previous writings on this subject, he says, are entirely unreliable. He presents as certain only what he has learned by observation. Even Aristotle, he finds, relied too much on hearsay, and when he quotes the eminent philosopher, it is usually to point out mistakes. Frederick's work is in truth a marvel of accuracy and completeness. He not only deals exhaustively with hawks, falcons, eagles, and all kinds of hunting birds; he precedes his more technical chapters with a sketch of ornithology in general, and from time to time he adds information concerning animals, plants, geography, and much else. Not the least remarkable feature of the book is the fact that it is decorated with hundreds of illustrations—pictures of birds skillfully drawn and colored from life, probably by artists under the emperor's personal direction.<sup>14</sup>

Among the many experiments which Frederick reports, two may be briefly stated. Having heard that in Norway certain geese

<sup>14</sup> The manuscript which has come down to us was the property of Manfred (see below, p. 538) an exact copy of the emperor's own book.

were alleged to be hatched from barnacles, he sent thither for some of the proper mollusks, but found that they would not produce geese. So he concluded that the legend arose because men had failed to discover where the geese nested. He also tells how, to learn whether vultures detected the presence of food by sight or by smell, he took such birds and covered their eyes. And since, under such conditions, they failed to notice meat placed close by, he decided that their acuteness was not in their sense of smell. Many other stories are told about this amazing author-emperor, and some of them sound quite like him—such as the tale of his bringing up babies in silence, to determine what, if any, language they would naturally speak.<sup>15</sup> This investigation, we are told, was a failure, for the children did not survive the experiment. Another fact that made the emperor's curiosity a byword was his habit of addressing questionnaires to learned men in all countries, seeking information on all kinds of difficult problems. For example, we hear that Frederick asked certain Egyptian scholars these among other questions: why an object appears bent when plunged in water; why a star looks bigger when it is near the horizon; and what produces the semblance of spots before the eyes.

A similar list of queries—concerning earth, heaven, hell, purgatory, the nature of the soul, salt and fresh water, hot springs, volcanoes, and winds—is reported by Michael Scot. The latter, a distinguished student of Aristotle and the Arabic sciences, served the imperial government as a sort of philosophic expert. He was even supposed to apply his knowledge of the stars to matters of state, for Frederick, like all the princes of that day and of many days to come, was a firm believer in astrology. Connected in one way or another with the Sicilian court were many other scholars—Moslems and Jews, as well as Christians. Leonard of Pisa, the greatest mathematician of the age, though not a resident of the southern kingdom, enjoyed the emperor's friendship and to him dedicated several of his famous books. As far as academic education was concerned, Frederick recognized its importance, but characteristically sought to make it a branch of his government. The University of Salerno, already in decline, became a department of state for the training of licensed physicians. And the University

Patronage  
of scholar-  
ship, edu-  
cation, and  
literature

<sup>15</sup> According to current ideas, Adam and Eve had been created with the ability to speak Hebrew. Would not that ability be inherited by their descendents? Cf. the ideas of Dante, below, p. 687.

of Naples, founded by Frederick in 1224, was from the first treated as an official school, the chief purpose of which was to produce lawyers for the imperial administration. The turbulent freedom of Paris and Bologna had no place in Frederick's bureaucracy.

Piero della Vigna has already been mentioned in connection with the *Liber Augustalis*. He was famous both as a jurist and as a rhetorician, being considered the foremost stylist of the thirteenth century. What Michael Scot was to the scientific group at the imperial court Piero was to the men of letters. Frederick himself was no mean linguist, for, in addition to the vernaculars of Italy, France, and Germany, he knew Latin, Greek, and Arabic. His learned essay on birds was of course written in the language of the schools, but he also, troubadour-fashion, composed lyric verse. And although in most regions of the peninsula Provençal remained conventional for all romantic poetry, Frederick, Piero della Vigna, and their fellows preferred to use their native Sicilian dialect. As Dante was soon to proclaim, Italian literature owed much to the patronage and leadership of Frederick II. Truly he earned the description of *stupor mundi*, "the amazement of the world."

### 3. ITALY AND THE EMPIRE AFTER FREDERICK II

Manfred,  
king of  
Sicily  
(1258-66)

According to Frederick's will, the Sicilian kingdom was to go by inheritance to his son Conrad, already installed as king in Germany. Until Conrad should arrive in Italy, the regency there was to be exercised by Manfred. The latter was a younger son who, though born out of wedlock, had been legitimated and endowed with a handsome principality. Innocent IV vainly tried to prevent this settlement from going into effect. Then, just as Conrad was beginning to assert his mastery of the peninsula, he was suddenly carried away by fever. And before the pope could take advantage of the fresh opportunity, he also died in 1254. The man who profited by the sudden turn of events was Manfred. Handsome, talented, and Italian-born, he was naturally preferred by the Sicilians to the infant son of Conrad in far-off Germany. Besides, the new pope, Alexander IV, was too easy-going to be formidable. The consequence was that Manfred, already the actual ruler of the southern kingdom, ignored papal excommunication and had himself formally crowned in 1258. Nor was he content with this success. Inside a few years he rapidly pushed

his authority into Lombardy, Tuscany, and much of the papal territory, including Rome itself.

This was the situation when, in 1261, the papal office passed to a Frenchman, Urban IV. He at once revived a project of Innocent IV to transfer the crown of Sicily to Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX<sup>16</sup> and already count of Provence by virtue of a lucky marriage. The negotiations were so long drawn out that Urban died before they were completed. But his successor, Clement IV, was also French, and the latter saw the plan actually carried out. Charles, with the consent of his royal brother, accepted the Sicilian kingdom as a papal fief, agreeing to stated conditions of service and promising to claim no sovereignty elsewhere in Italy. To raise an army, the pope proclaimed a crusade against Manfred and, to provide the necessary cash, authorized a special tax on the clergy of France. By the end of 1265 the allies assembled another host such as had been employed to crush the Albigensians, and with it Charles won a decisive victory at Benevento. Manfred, refusing to survive his defeat, died charging the enemy. So the hope of retrieving the Hohenstaufen fortunes fell to Conradin, the sixteen-year-old son of Conrad IV. It proved illusory. Victory remained with the Angevin, who followed it up by ruthless massacre and proscription. The last of the imperial breed was hunted down, given a mock trial, and executed as a traitor. The pope saw fit not to enter a plea of mercy.

Thus Italy was introduced to a new master, a French adventurer who quickly proved himself not only a good general, but also a remarkable statesman, crafty and relentless under the urge of a devouring ambition. Clement IV, in the face of the German invasion, had recognized Charles as Pacifier of Tuscany—a vague commission which in one way or another he now extended into a sort of dictatorship over northern Italy. The office of emperor had long been vacant, and on Clement's death in 1268 the cardinals failed to elect a pope for three years—a respite which Charles used to consolidate his position in Italy and to revive an aggressive Sicilian diplomacy throughout the Mediterranean world. He championed the neglected cause of the Latin Empire in the Balkans and made preparations for regaining Constantinople from Michael Palæologus. This was to be preliminary to recon-

Charles  
of Anjou,  
king of  
Sicily  
(1266–85)

<sup>16</sup> See below, p. 550.

stituting the kingdom of Jerusalem which, since the Moslem occupation of the Holy City in 1244, had become little more than a title claimed by the king of Cyprus.<sup>17</sup> During these same years Charles was resuming the policy of Frederick II in northern Africa, compelling the city of Marseilles to submit to his authority, asserting control of Sardinia, and seeking to establish his supremacy over the adjacent waters.

The inter-  
regnum in  
Germany  
(1256-73)

Meanwhile Germany had become accustomed to having no royal government at all. Frederick II, as we have seen, paid very little attention to his northern kingdom, allowing the princes and the free cities unrestricted authority in their respective territories. His son, Conrad IV, exercised slight power outside his own duchy of Suabia, and William of Holland, the anti-king set up by Innocent IV, held nothing but a disputed title. Even that came to an end with William's death in 1256, and the double election of the following year turned into a complete farce. Two princes were proclaimed by rival parties: Alfonso of Castile, and Richard of Cornwall, brother of the English king, Henry III.<sup>18</sup> Of these two the former never came to Germany, and the latter, after his formal coronation, paid only three fleeting visits to the Rhineland. As a consequence, the period after 1256, commonly known as the Interregnum, marks the final dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and the acquisition of virtual independence by the imperial vassals.

Rudolf of  
Habsburg  
(1273-91)

Perhaps Richard's death in 1272 would not have inspired the princes to install a successor, had not the new pope brought pressure to bear upon them. Gregory X, finally chosen in 1271, was heart and soul devoted to one cause, the revival of the crusade, and so was led to believe that Europe needed an emperor. Under his urging, the electors—now reduced to a narrow group<sup>19</sup>—met in 1273. Deliberately passing over the Bohemian king, who had been suggested by the pope, they offered the crown to a man whom they thought too obscure to become dangerous. This was Rudolf of Habsburg, landgrave of Alsace. Although acceptable to Gregory, Rudolf's election brought the crusade no step nearer. Having taken the cross and set the date for his imperial coronation, the new king went neither to Rome nor to Palestine. Instead, he gave his attention solely to German affairs—conduct which gave

<sup>17</sup> For the crusade of Louis IX, see below, pp. 551 f.

<sup>18</sup> See below, p. 557.

<sup>19</sup> See below, p. 592.

him no title of sainthood, but which eloquently testified to his good sense.

The reason why Ottokar, king of Bohemia, had not been considered for the German throne was that he was already too powerful. In addition to his hereditary dominions, he had recently obtained, largely through forcible seizure, the territories of Austria, Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola. Having refused Rudolf all recognition, he was now summoned before an imperial diet to answer for his conduct. When he replied only with insults, a sentence of outlawry was passed against him and his fiefs were declared forfeit to the crown. All this was simply a matter of legal procedure. The surprising fact was that Rudolf, thanks to his own determination and to an alliance with Hungary, was able to enforce his decrees. Ottokar was defeated and, after he had again rebelled, slain in battle. Accordingly, while Bohemia passed to Ottokar's heir, Austria and the adjacent fiefs were taken by Rudolf and bestowed on members of his own family. From that moment until 1918 the house of Habsburg was solidly ensconced on the Danube (see Map XVIII).

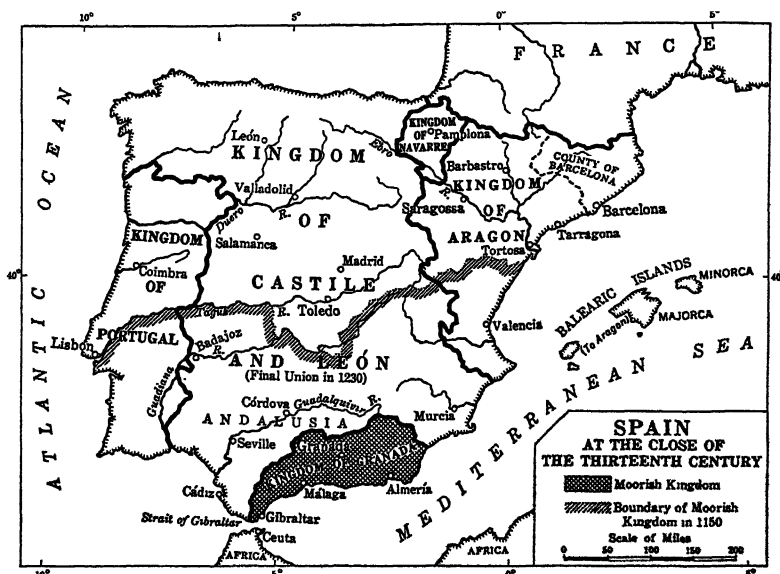
Rudolf's preoccupation with German politics was naturally welcome to Charles of Anjou, who had no desire for a rival in Italy. It was rather the papal opposition that now began to cause him trouble. Gregory X spoiled his plan for a Byzantine crusade by listening to the Greek emperor's promise to reestablish ecclesiastical unity. The Italian Nicholas III (1277-80) was even more antagonistic, forcing Charles, very much against his will, to relinquish all offices in Lombardy and central Italy. Finally, on the death of Nicholas, Charles was able to secure the election of another French pope, Martin IV, who proved in every way a complaisant supporter of the Angevin policies. Restoring Charles to much of his lost authority, the pope in 1281 broke with the Byzantine government and so prepared the way for a new Latin conquest of Constantinople. Charles, in alliance with the Venetians, had already launched an offensive in Albania. Everything seemed propitious for the success of his magnificent enterprise, when all his dreams were shattered by an unforeseen catastrophe in the west—the famous Sicilian Vespers of 1282. On March 30, Easter Monday, a minor incident led to an anti-French riot at Palermo and this, fed by years of bitter hatred for the Angevin tyranny, quickly grew into a general massacre of Charles's supporters throughout the entire island. The disaster proved irrep-

The  
Sicilian  
Vespers  
(1282)



arable, for it coincided with armed intervention from Aragon, a power which Charles had foolishly underestimated.

At this point it becomes necessary to turn once more to the history of Spain. In the face of the Moorish counter-offensive, only two of the half-dozen Christian principalities had been able to make much headway in the early twelfth century. These were Portugal and Catalonia.<sup>20</sup> The count of the former territory, to



assure his independence of León, acknowledged himself a vassal of the papacy, and in 1179 he was promoted to the rank of king. The honor was deserved, for his dynasty had not only recaptured Lisbon but made considerable progress to the south of the River Tagus. On the opposite side of the peninsula the count of Barcelona was even more successful. Raymond Berengar III inherited Catalonia and by marriage secured Provence. His connections beyond the Pyrenees brought him the aid of many French barons, while the commercial importance of Barcelona attracted the assistance of the Genoese and the Pisans. With the active support of the papacy, he was thus able to assume the offensive against the Moors on both land and sea—a campaign that resulted in a noteworthy advance.

<sup>20</sup> See above, p. 395.

## THE HEIGHT OF THE CHURCH: POLITICS 543

Raymond Berengar III was succeeded in 1131 by his son, Raymond Berengar IV. The latter, having married a princess of Aragon, had the good fortune to acquire the crown of that country in 1150. Earlier the Aragonese had pushed down the Ebro to Saragossa; under the new dynasty they now liberated the entire valley by taking the city of Tarragona. Henceforth Aragon, thanks to the union with Catalonia, ranked as a great Mediterranean power. The successors of Raymond Berengar IV continued an aggressive policy in two directions: southwest against the Moorish kingdom of Valencia and northeast into Languedoc and Provence. It was the latter connection that inspired Peter II's ill-fated attempt to check the Albigensian Crusade.<sup>21</sup> Slain at Muret in 1213, he was succeeded by his son, known to history as James the Conqueror. This illustrious king, in cooperation with Ferdinand III of Castile and León,<sup>22</sup> revived the holy war against the Moslem with conspicuous success. While Ferdinand reduced Andalusia and Murcia, James took the Balearic Islands and finally the great port of Valencia. By the middle of the century his share of the conquest was complete, and he found himself free to concentrate attention on the affairs of France and Italy.

Inevitably the Aragonese king was drawn into conflict with Charles of Anjou. The two princes first became rivals for the hand of Beatrice, heiress of Provence, and it was Charles who won. Later, while the pope was arranging for the Angevin succession in Sicily, James announced his hostility to the plan by marrying his eldest son to the daughter of Manfred (see Table VI). By itself, this Hohenstaufen alliance might never have had serious consequences; but as lord of Montpellier, Barcelona, Valencia, and the Balearic Islands, James would necessarily oppose the extension of Sicilian imperialism over the western Mediterranean. When Peter III acceded to the throne in 1276, this policy was actively continued. He became the avowed champion of the Hohenstaufen traditions in Italy, allying with all the enemies of Charles—particularly with Genoa, the Lombard cities, and the Greek emperor. At the very moment when the explosion occurred in Sicily, Peter had his fleet prepared, ostensibly, for a crusade against the Turks. Now, as the pope refused all compromise with the Sicilian rebels, they naturally turned to Aragon

Peter III,  
Sicily,  
and the  
Aragonese  
crusade  
(1276-85)

<sup>21</sup> See below, p. 548.

<sup>22</sup> The two kingdoms were permanently united in 1230.

for support. Quickly diverting his forces from Africa, Peter drove the Angevins from Messina and before the end of the year was master of the island.

The immediate result of this affair was the proclamation by Martin IV of a crusade against Aragon. The prime mover in the enterprise was, of course, Charles of Anjou, but Philip III of France<sup>23</sup> was enlisted as commander of the expedition by the attractive offer of the Aragonese crown to his younger brother. Whatever the grandiose dreams entertained by the papal coalition, they quickly faded. The year 1285 brought death to all the major participants: first to Charles of Anjou, then to Pope Martin, next to Philip of France, and finally to Peter of Aragon. Of the four, the most picturesque figure was assuredly the great Angevin adventurer. His passing marked the end of the last serious attempt in the Middle Ages to bring Italy under one secular administration. Henceforth the peninsula was left to unceasing conflict among a horde of petty states. One of them was styled the kingdom of Sicily, but it no longer included that island, which continued to form a separate kingdom under a branch of the Aragonese house. These were the Two Sicilies, which continued to be marked on the political map of Europe until the nineteenth century.

Guelf and  
Ghibelline

For a long time the names of Guelf and Ghibelline<sup>24</sup> had reverberated throughout all Italy. The latter, an Italian substitute for Hohenstaufen, came to designate the party of imperialists; the former, to designate their opponents, the papalists. So the Angevins were Guelfs and the Aragonese were Ghibellines. Traditionally, Florence and Milan were Guelf, while Pisa and Pavia were Ghibelline. But the alignment was at most a matter of vague loyalty. Florence, for example, had no desire for a papal government and might be quite willing to fight either Milan or the Angevin king. Indeed, after the disappearance of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, the old party names often came to have only a local significance—as epithets tossed back and forth in feuds of city against city and of faction against faction. Largely on account of such turmoil, it was now becoming the general practice throughout Lombardy for a commune to be governed by a dictator. Sometimes the office was legally bestowed by the citizens;

<sup>23</sup> See below, p. 565.

<sup>24</sup> Said to be a corruption of Waiblingen, the name of an estate associated with the family of Hohenstaufen.

sometimes it was usurped by force. In one way or another Italians were already used to the tyrants who were to play so prominent a part in their subsequent history.

To this fashion one northern city was never to submit; instead, Venice became synonymous with political stability through the unbroken rule of a closed oligarchy. The final step in that direction was taken in 1298, when membership in the great council, and with it eligibility to governmental office, was made into a strictly hereditary privilege. Thenceforward political power at Venice remained the monopoly of certain great families, whose marriages and births were all listed in an official register, the famous Golden Book. How the Fourth Crusade brought the ambitious republic a splendid maritime empire has already been seen. Most of it was retained throughout the mediæval period, but the restoration of Greek rule at Constantinople deprived the Venetians of their dominance in the capital and readmitted their ancient enemies, the Genoese. Then ensued a bitter duel between the two commercial powers, eventually won by Venice.

At the close of the thirteenth century, however, the advantage lay rather with Genoa, which had also, in alliance with Florence, been successful against Pisa in the west. The ruin of the latter city, practically accomplished by the destruction of its fleet in 1284, left Florence the greatest center of wealth and culture in all Tuscany. Theoretically subject to the pope, it was actually a republic, and a very turbulent one. In 1260 a coalition of Ghibelline nobles, aided by Manfred, took the city. Then, six years later, the power of the Guelfs, under a new and more democratic constitution, was restored by Charles of Anjou. His death brought further changes in the government, accompanied by fierce contests between nobles and guildsmen, between the greater and the lesser guilds, and between rival factions of nobles. This was the environment that was to produce the foremost writers and artists of fourteenth-century Italy.

Superficially the popes seemed now to have gained the independence for which they had so long striven. The Hohenstaufen dynasty had been extirpated; the Holy Roman Empire had virtually ceased to exist; Italy had relapsed into chaos; even the proud kingdom of Sicily had been divided and ruined. This series of disasters to the imperial cause might indeed be taken to mark a signal triumph for the papacy, but its cost was heavy. Gregory VII's political defeat proved to be a great moral victory for the

Venice

Flo

The  
waning  
prestige  
of the  
papacy

church; the political victories of his thirteenth-century successors were accompanied by a shocking decline in ecclesiastical prestige. It was not that the later popes were bad men; their average in personal integrity was extraordinarily high. The source of trouble lay rather in the traditions of their office—traditions which forced them to devote their best energies to the non-religious tasks of diplomacy, warfare, and finance. In a more primitive age the pope could play an active part in world politics and yet remain primarily a spiritual leader. That was now impossible.

The test of a good politician is success. In their effort to be successful, the popes of the thirteenth century forgot that there are nobler ambitions—and they could not always succeed. The Roman church, by identifying itself with the Angevin cause in Italy, suffered defeat along with it. The Sicilian Vespers were a disaster from which the papacy, as a secular power, never recovered. And the ensuing war of revenge against Aragon was even more calamitous, for it proclaimed the utter degradation of the crusading ideal. While papal threats and curses were being ignored by the disillusioned peoples of the west, the Moslems completed the reconquest of the Holy Land, taking Antioch in 1268 and Acre in 1291. Meanwhile the growing subservience of the church to French ambitions served as a preliminary to the tragic pontificate of Boniface VIII.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE EMERGENCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

#### I. FRANCE UNDER LOUIS VIII AND LOUIS IX

THE year 1223 saw the passing of Philip Augustus, who had brought the French monarchy to a new height of power. So unquestioned was now the Capetian authority that the king found it unnecessary to crown his son during his own lifetime,<sup>1</sup> and Louis VIII inherited the throne as a matter of course. Otherwise his brief reign is memorable only in one respect—his participation in the Albigensian Crusade, proclaimed in 1208 by Pope Innocent III.<sup>2</sup> Philip Augustus, being preoccupied with a great project for the conquest of England, and being extremely cautious about fighting wars for another's advantage, abstained from all personal activity in the affair. He did, however, give his vassals permission to enlist in the sacred cause, merely stipulating that no final disposition of the conquered territory could be made without his consent. Accordingly, in 1209, a host of northern volunteers proceeded, under ecclesiastical leadership, to invade the county of Toulouse.

The Albigensian  
Crusade

Since by that time Count Raymond VI had made formal submission to the pope, the crusaders turned their attention to his recalcitrant vassals. The viscount of Béziers was the first to suffer. Amid shocking scenes of rapine and massacre, his cities were taken and his lands devastated. The conquered fief was then awarded to Simon de Montfort, a rather obscure baron of the Île de France. Earlier he had joined the Fourth Crusade, but had left the main host before Zara and gone to Syria, where he had gained nothing. Now, by virtue of a ruthless determination and a remarkable genius for military command, he was quickly to become the master of Languedoc. Raymond, under pressure of constant aggression, again broke with the church and was once more excommunicated. By 1211 a fresh army was advancing to complete the conquest of the county, when its de-

Simon de  
Montfort

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 510.

fense was undertaken by Peter II of Aragon.<sup>3</sup> Although he was a staunch Catholic, his orthodoxy did not prevent him, as lord of Barcelona and Montpellier, from objecting to northern intervention in local affairs. As his offer of mediation had been refused, he joined the count of Toulouse and formed a coalition of southern princes to drive out the invader.

The result was merely to assure the triumph of Simon de Montfort, who overwhelmed the combined forces of the allies at Muret in 1213. Peter was killed, his coalition was scattered, and Raymond was forced to make unconditional surrender to the pope. For some time Innocent had been trying to check the political ambitions of his crusaders. He had again appealed to the French king to take charge of the expedition, but Philip Augustus still held aloof, agreeing only to send Prince Louis into the south for a brief visit. Now, after Muret, the only solution was to make Simon the count of Toulouse; and as Raymond abdicated in favor of his son, the latter obtained the merest fragment of the old principality, hardly more than one small imperial fief to the east of the Rhone. This remained the situation until Simon's death in 1218, when Raymond VII easily regained his patrimony. Simon's heir, finding himself powerless, resigned all claims into the hands of the king. Accordingly, just before Philip died, he had the satisfaction of seeing the whole Albigensian adventure turned to the enormous advantage of the monarchy.

Louis VIII  
(1223-26)

Immediately on securing the crown, Louis assumed command of a new crusade proclaimed by Honorius III to oust the restored count of Toulouse. The king drove an excellent bargain: at the expense of the church he could now conquer a very desirable province and keep it for himself. Besides, he had ecclesiastical authorization for encroaching on imperial territory beyond the Rhone. Proceeding down that river in 1226, Louis took Avignon by storm and made a triumphal procession through southern Languedoc, receiving the submission of Béziers, Narbonne, Carcassonne, and other famous cities. Then, just as Toulouse itself was about to fall, he was stricken by disease and died before he could regain his own country. Momentarily it seemed as if that unexpected calamity might not only undo the work of the crusade, but wreck the fortunes of the monarchy altogether. The new king, Louis IX, was a child of twelve, and the establishment

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 543.

of a regency in the hands of the queen mother was the signal for a widespread feudal insurrection.

Blanche of Castile, however, proved herself more than a match for the opposition. The leagues of discontented nobles were broken up and Henry III of England, who had thought to recover the entire Angevin inheritance, gained only humiliation. Meanwhile the regent had also settled the question of Toulouse by a very advantageous treaty. That portion of Languedoc already taken by Louis VIII was to remain incorporated in the royal domain; the rest was to be held by Raymond VII until his death, when it should go with the hand of his daughter to one of the king's brothers. Thus was effected a political union between the north and south of France that was to have momentous results. For the first time the direct rule of the Capetians was extended to the shores of the Mediterranean, where it introduced entirely new standards of governmental efficiency. But Languedoc was a ruined country. The brilliant civilization that had been reflected in the songs of the troubadours was destroyed by armed conquest in the guise of a crusade and by the increasing terror of the Inquisition that followed.

The  
regency of  
Blanche of  
Castile  
(1226-34)

When Louis IX assumed personal control of the government, the decadence of the feudal nobility was evident. The great Angevin dominion on the continent had been reduced to a portion of Aquitaine, popularly known as Guienne; and it was in the hands of Henry III, whose incompetence was already notorious. Although Burgundy and Brittany were virtually independent principalities, neither was at all formidable. Flanders, since Baldwin IX had secured the crown of the Latin Empire,<sup>4</sup> had rapidly come under the dominance of the French court and was now on the verge of a paralyzing civil war. Blois and Champagne were again separated and both remained comparatively peaceful. The count of Champagne, it is true, rose to greater eminence through the inheritance of Navarre, but he showed himself a loyal friend to Blanche of Castile and her son. In the south, with the ruin of Toulouse, first rank among the feudal nobles passed to the lesser princes of Foix, Comminges, and Béarn. Catalonia now ceased to be a fief of the French crown and became part of the kingdom of Aragon.

The great  
fiefs

Under these circumstances, the Capetian house came to enjoy

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 528.



The  
Capetian  
appanages

a prominence such as had seemed impossible only a century earlier. The enhanced glory, however, was not without its own perils. To establish the king's younger sons in the world, it was thought necessary to provide them with appanages, impressive fiefs carved out of the royal domain. By their father's will, the brothers of Louis IX were each handsomely endowed: Robert with Artois, Alfonse with Poitou and Auvergne, and Charles with Anjou. Of these three the eldest was killed on the crusade in 1250, but his county, passing to a long line of heirs, remained a separate principality for several hundred years. Alfonse of Poitiers, though he eventually died without heirs, became the greatest seigneur of France next to the king, for it was he who, through marriage to Raymond's daughter, acquired the county of Toulouse. Charles of Anjou had an even more splendid fortune, obtaining first the county of Provence and then the kingdom of Sicily (see Table II).<sup>5</sup>

Joinville,  
biog-  
rapher of  
St. Louis

Louis IX was fortunate even in his relatives. Being delivered from the necessity of constant war against jealous princes, he could devote his energies to whatever projects lay near his heart. It was thus possible for him to be a successful king of France and at the same time to lead a saintly life, for he was canonized by the church in 1297. As between these two phases of his career, it was of course the latter that most deeply impressed his contemporaries, and it was that which inspired the justly famed memoirs of Jean, sire de Joinville. Like Villehardouin a noble of Champagne, he was the head of a distinguished family in which the office of seneschal was hereditary. Joinville tells us—not without pride—that he was never the king's man; that he was only the king's friend and companion, having first appeared at court for the knighting of Alfonse in 1241. Subsequently he took the cross and accompanied the ill-fated expedition to Egypt. Happily he survived it; likewise the king, the king's son, Philip III, and the king's grandson, Philip IV. This last-named prince was married to Jeanne, countess of Champagne, and it was at her request that Joinville undertook to dictate his memoirs of St. Louis. The task was not completed till 1309—and the author still lived another ten years, to die at the grand old age of ninety-five.

The book which Joinville "caused to be written" must remain

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 539 f.

one of the world's classics as long as human character and moving incident continue to hold their charm for readers. The central figure, of course, is the saintly king, on whose Christian faith and conduct the author lovingly dwells. But the account that he gives us is no sanctimonious eulogy; it is what he has remembered himself—no saint, but a plain knight and man of the world, who liked his wine straight, who refused to wash the feet of dirty beggars, and who avowed he would rather have committed thirty mortal sins than be a leper. Every anecdote is colored by his personal reactions, by emotions that he makes us share. He is so engagingly honest, so enthusiastic and yet so sensible, that he immediately wins our respect and affection. We at once decide that St. Louis must indeed have been a wonderful man to have inspired such a devoted follower as Jean de Joinville.

The king was beyond a doubt deeply and sincerely religious. All the acts of his reign testify to the fact that he was fundamentally a mystic whose first thought was for heaven. While governing his kingdom as a matter of duty, he always found time for prayer, meditation, and ascetic practices. He seems to have married and reared a family principally for reasons of state; at any rate, Joinville says that for five years on end he never heard the king refer either to wife or children. Even among his intimates, though always kind and gentle, Louis remained strangely detached—a man of striking charm, to be revered rather than loved. In all matters of belief he was exceedingly conventional. He warmly supported the activities of the Inquisition and helped to extend its authority throughout the kingdom. For unbelievers he had no more sympathy than for heretics. He once told Joinville that, while a learned doctor might profitably argue with Jews, the layman's refutation must be to run them through with the sword. Louis's crusade was launched as much the same sort of unreasoning gesture. The enterprise seems strangely out of place in the thirteenth century; a grandson of Philip Augustus might well have realized that the reconquest of the Holy Land was a task beyond the resources of any European prince, no matter how brave or pious.

The king's  
character

Louis, however, had learned nothing from the experiences of his predecessors. Against the advice of his mother and all his ministers, he took the cross in 1244, when Jerusalem was recovered by the Moslems, and spent the following years in preparing for the expedition. In 1248, with an ignorance of the Saracens

His first  
crusade  
(1248-54)

and their world that was truly pathetic, he took his splendid army across the sea to Cyprus. The plan was that which had been talked about in 1202 and vainly tried in 1218—to regain Palestine by first securing Egypt. In the spring of 1249 the host took Damietta without opposition and then, after considerable delay, struck north across the delta toward Cairo. This was itself a foolhardy effort and its failure was assured by the king's blunders, which Joinville takes no pains to conceal. Vanquished in battle and decimated by pestilence, the army turned back in 1250, only to be surrounded and captured by the resourceful enemy. So the crusade ended with the surrender of Damietta and the payment of an enormous ransom for the survivors.

His  
second  
crusade  
(1270)

Even after a four-year sojourn in Syria, the king's passion for holy pilgrimage remained unappeased. While attending to the needs of his kingdom and acting as general arbiter of European affairs, he still dreamed of another crusade. Finally, in a royal council of 1267, the expedition was formally announced, but it was not destined to go to the Holy Land. By this time Louis had been persuaded by the pope to support Charles of Anjou for the Sicilian crown, and that ambitious brother, it may be supposed, had something to do with the diversion of Louis's crusade to Tunis; otherwise the undertaking is even less creditable to the king's intelligence. At any rate, in 1270 the fleet sailed for Africa, anchoring before the ancient city of Carthage in July, the worst season of the year. During most of his life the king had been a chronic invalid and before embarking he was already too weak to sit on a horse. Now, as the inevitable pestilence seized the army, he was among the first of its victims. Joinville, who lived to thank God that he had refused to join this campaign, stated his opinion thus frankly:

To my mind they committed mortal sin who encouraged him to go, for France had reached a condition when all the kingdom was at peace within itself and with its neighbors—and never again has it been so since he left it. . . . Weak as he was, if he had stayed in France, he might have lived long enough to do a great deal of good.

Peace with  
Henry III  
of England  
(1259)

A king whose heart was thus set on visionary crusades would naturally tend to follow a pacific policy in other directions. Thanks to the circumstances of his accession, Louis IX had no dangerous enemies to fear at home, and by deliberate choice he took no aggressive steps against any of his neighbors. A less

conscientious prince would probably have attempted to profit by the troubles of the later Hohenstaufen; Louis left such worldly ambitions to his unscrupulous brother Charles. Nor did he take advantage of Henry III's feeble administration to complete the conquest of the Angevin inheritance. Had he done so, he might have saved his country the horrors of the Hundred Years' War; instead, he agreed to the Treaty of Paris in 1259 which by its very generosity served to aggravate the situation for his successors. The actual holdings of the English king had previously been reduced to little more than the old duchy of Gascony. To that was now added a virtually equivalent territory comprising Limousin and Périgord, together with the expectation of other lands should Alfonse of Poitiers die without heirs. Besides, Louis agreed to pay a sum necessary to keep five hundred knights in the field for two years—money which he thought Henry would use for the crusade, but which was really spent in the Barons' War.<sup>6</sup> The French king got little beyond moral satisfaction—Henry's homage for Guienne and his abandonment of all claim to Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou.

In the sphere of domestic government Louis was as conservative as in that of religion. Whatever rights he believed inherent in his kingship he rigorously enforced; beyond them he never sought to go. His reign was accordingly less noteworthy for the establishment of new institutions than for the development of old ones—and just what the king's personal influence was in such matters is somewhat conjectural. For both France and England it was an age of rapid legal and constitutional progress which was carried on by an army of trained civil servants, with or without effective royal supervision. In both countries the great central organ of administration was the *curia regis*,<sup>7</sup> the king's feudal court. It normally consisted of a few permanent ministers, but to grant aids, proclaim campaigns, or transact other extraordinary business, it might be expanded by a general summons to all royal vassals. Under Philip Augustus the smaller *curia* already included many professional judges and administrators, and as this group was constantly enlarged in the thirteenth century, what had been a single body tended to split into separate units, each with peculiar functions. So, by the time of Louis IX, two offshoots of the *curia* had taken definite form and

Constitutional development under Louis IX

<sup>6</sup> See below, p. 558.

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 379.

come to have separate sets of records: the *chambre des comptes*, which had charge of the king's financial accounts, and the *parlement*,<sup>8</sup> his court of justice at Paris.

In all such matters the French kings learned much from Norman-Angevin example after the conquest of John's northern fiefs, for the government of Henry II had far surpassed in efficiency that of the Capetians in the twelfth century. From this source came also many lessons in local administration, which were first applied to the royal domain by Philip Augustus. Under him and his successors territorial districts were placed under officials called bailiffs (*baillis*) in the north and seneschals (*sénéchaux*) in the south. No matter which name was used, these royal agents exercised very much the same powers as the English sheriffs—collecting the king's revenue, holding his lower courts, carrying out his instructions, and rendering accounts to his central government. Like the sheriffs, too, they constantly tended to abuse their authority—a situation that led Louis IX to send *enquêteurs* on regular missions to hold investigations (*enquêtes*) and hear the complaints of the people.

One of the most characteristic features of the saintly king's administration was provided by his deep conviction that any one who appealed to him should obtain equal justice. Joinville tells how Louis would frequently seat himself in the forest of Vincennes or in the gardens of Paris and there dispatch in person all suits that might be brought before him by rich or poor. Improvement of justice is the keynote in his many ordinances—a sacred tradition running back to Charlemagne and the patriarchs of the Old Testament. Yet his solicitude for the public welfare did not lessen the burden of taxation on his subjects. Despite the ascetic habits to which he clung in private, his court was maintained in truly regal magnificence, and what he saved by abstaining from European wars was more than offset by his crusades and the ambitious projects of his brothers. Especially bitter complaints were raised by the towns, which asserted, not without justification, that the king's taxes were forcing them into bankruptcy. The aids levied for the English peace of 1259 and the papal exactions for Charles of Anjou were denounced on all sides. It was only later, when conditions had become infinitely worse, that men looked back on the reign of Louis IX as an age of perfect bliss.

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<sup>8</sup> Note the different character of the English parliament, below, p. 558.

In many respects his régime served as a precedent for that of his very unsaintly grandson, Philip IV.

## 2. ENGLAND UNDER HENRY III AND EDWARD I

The political situation in England was reversed by the sudden death of King John.<sup>9</sup> In 1215 the baronage and the city of London had compelled the king to grant their demands in the famous Magna Carta. Thereupon he had appealed to his ally and feudal lord, Pope Innocent III, who had promptly annulled the charter and commanded the rebels to submit. Refusing to obey, they had gone so far as to recognize Prince Louis of France as their sovereign, when the news arrived that John was dead. Since his son was an inoffensive boy of nine whose cause was actively espoused by the new pope, Honorius III, the opposition quickly broke down. Within a year Louis was back in France and the English kingdom was again at peace under an administration jointly controlled by a papal legate and a group of experienced ministers. The reign of Henry III, thus beginning with a minority, lasted for well over half a century; yet, as far as the king's own activity was concerned, it was singularly uneventful. The history of England during that time is chiefly remarkable for the growth of institutions and the advance of culture.

The  
general  
character  
of Henry  
III's reign

The outstanding cultural developments of the age have been noted in previous chapters. The universities, scholastic education, the mendicant orders, commerce, chivalry, romantic literature, Gothic architecture—all these the island kingdom shared with France. Despite the emergence of certain insular peculiarities, there was as yet no distinctively English civilization. Nevertheless, within the sphere of law and government the work of the earlier kings, being steadily continued under Henry III by a host of able subordinates, began to assume the form that we recognize as the English constitution. The process was, of course, one to which no exact dates can be assigned. We may only say that the thirteenth century, following the reign of the great innovator, Henry II, was in general a formative period—a time when England, now separated from the Norman-Angevin patrimony, became clearly differentiated as a self-sufficient state. The culminating stage was introduced by the accession of another constructive statesman, Edward I.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 412.

Magna  
Carta

The first important act of Henry III's government was to re-issue Magna Carta with a number of changes; and since the revised charter was subsequently confirmed on various other occasions, it came to be regarded as a fundamental law of the kingdom and remains today one of the world's most famous documents. To distinguish its true meaning is therefore an important matter of historical criticism. Magna Carta was not, as all patriotic Englishmen used to believe, a great monument of national liberty. Being a grant of privileges on the part of the king to the freemen of England, it could not apply to the mass of the people, which was still thoroughly servile. Indeed, if the charter is analyzed by any one familiar with contemporary institutions, it is found to include little besides provisions dictated by baronial interests. A guarantee which the Londoners hoped would exempt them from arbitrary taxation proved illusory. The promises inserted for the benefit of the barons' tenants were too vague to be of much use. The church received a separate charter of its own.

As would be expected, of a grant extorted from a despotic king by a feudal rising, Magna Carta was in the main a reactionary document. The first few articles supplemented Henry I's Coronation Charter<sup>10</sup> by more strictly defining the king's rights in connection with reliefs and other feudal incidents. The following articles limited the royal power of levying aids and scutages, of fining men convicted of crime, of requiring more service than was owed, of appropriating materials and labor without payment, and of making various other unwarranted exactions. The barons even sought to undo much of Henry II's judicial reform by restoring to their own courts the justice that had been diverted to those of the king.<sup>11</sup> The famous clause assuring to every free-man "trial by his peers" had no reference to the jury, but merely reasserted the ancient feudal custom that a baron was entitled to trial by his social equals—by his fellow barons, and not the king's professional judges. On the other hand, a few articles were of a truly progressive character, notably the one to secure the more frequent holding in the counties of the king's possessory assizes, according to which certain cases of land tenure were determined by jury.

Magna Carta, of course, enunciated no revolutionary principle by placing the king below the law. There were many things

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 373.

<sup>11</sup> See above, pp. 381 f.

which a feudal prince was not supposed to do; the trouble was to prevent his doing them if he were powerful enough to defy restraint. Henry I, in his Coronation Charter, had solemnly sworn to remove various evil customs which, as a matter of fact, he carefully retained and extended. The authors of *Magna Carta* recognized the difficulty and sought to answer it by their famous Article 61. The barons were to elect a standing committee of twenty-five, to whom all complaints of royal transgression should be reported. And if, within forty days after a formal remonstrance, the king had failed to give redress, the Twenty-Five were empowered to lead the country in making war upon him until such time as he should submit. How far the men of 1215 were from any concept of constitutional monarchy may be seen from this crude and impracticable proposal. That is the only reason why it need be mentioned, for it was left out of the reissue and formed no part of the recognized law.

The problem of enforcement

As Henry gained maturity, his administration became increasingly unpopular. One complaint against him was that he was too devoted to foreigners—Poitevins, Gascons, and relatives of his Provençal wife. This feeling of nationality on the part of the baronage was a new factor in the political situation. It was occasioned by John's loss of his northern French fiefs, which had compelled the Anglo-Norman gentleman to choose between continental and insular possessions.<sup>12</sup> Another chronic source of discontent was Henry's subservience to the papacy. A pious, mild-tempered man, he always remembered with deep gratitude that Honourous III had helped to preserve his kingdom in the dark days of 1216-17. So he showed himself a model vassal of the Apostolic See, meekly permitting the popes, through resident legates at court, greatly to increase their authority over the English church. In particular, they now extended the practice of making nominations to local sees and parishes, often naming Italians who regarded their appointments as mere sources of revenue and hired cheap substitutes to do all the work. Furthermore, the popes, for the sake of their Sicilian crusades and other ambitious projects, were allowed by Henry to levy frequent taxes on the clergy.

Complaints against Henry III's government

Such grievances, together with the king's mounting demands for subsidies, eventually aroused bitter opposition at the meetings

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 391.



Parlia-  
ment and  
taxation

of the great central court which was now becoming known as the parliament.<sup>13</sup> Articles 12 and 14 of Magna Carta had provided that, except for the three aids allowed by feudal custom, no aid or scutage should be levied without the "common counsel of the kingdom"—that is to say, without the consent of the barons. To obtain it, the king should issue to each of his "greater barons"—including archbishops, bishops, and abbots—individual summons by personal letter; the rest of the barons were to be notified by a general announcement read in the county courts. These articles, though dropped from the reissue of the charter, defined a customary procedure that was regularly followed throughout the thirteenth century. Scutages and other taxes on the feudal class were secured by grant of parliament, which, for that reason and for a variety of administrative business, came to be called more frequently. The tallage, on the other hand, remained a more or less arbitrary impost, the bulk of which was got through negotiation with the individual towns.

The  
Provisions  
of Oxford  
(1258)

By the time of Henry III, the increased cost of government and military defense, as well as the king's luxurious tastes, kept him in chronic financial straits. And as he continued to make costly blunders in war and diplomacy, parliament began to refuse all aid, or to stipulate conditions that the king would not accept. In spite of remonstrance, he would neither reform his administration nor allow a baronial commission to supervise the expenditure of public moneys. Finally, on the threat of a general insurrection, he yielded to the demands of a parliament at Oxford in 1258 and swore to an ordinance which was there drawn up. It gave control of his ministers and of all his official acts to the parliament or to a standing commission of fifteen barons. For a time the reforming party, with the solid backing of the merchants and the lesser landholders, carried all before it. In 1261, however, the king was emboldened by dissensions among the barons to cancel his enactment of 1258. The result, after two years of futile negotiations, was a baronial uprising headed, strangely enough, by a Frenchman who only a few years earlier had been considered one of the king's foreign favorites.

Simon de Montfort, youngest son of the famous crusader, first appeared in England to assert a claim to the earldom of

<sup>13</sup> From the French *parler*, to talk; originally a vague word that could be applied to any council.

Leicester. Having obtained it, he rose so high in the royal favor as to marry the king's sister. Then ensued a series of quarrels, and Simon became a prominent member of the parliamentary opposition. In 1264 he assumed command of the insurrectionary forces, depending for support on the bourgeoisie and the lesser nobility rather than on the great barons, most of whom were with the king. And though badly outmatched in point of numbers, he was able, through generalship worthy of his father, to win a brilliant victory. At Lewes, in 1264, Simon routed the royal army and captured the king. So, for a little over a year, he was master of England—an opportunity which he used to establish a government modeled on that of 1258, but with a more liberal base. Simon enjoys the honor of having assembled the first parliament to include representatives both of the counties and of the boroughs. Then, in 1265, the remarkable statesman-adventurer was slain at Evesham in battle with Edward, Henry's eldest son, who thenceforth took over the task of restoring the monarchy. His success in reconciling all parties may be judged from the fact that, having taken the cross, he remained in the Holy Land until 1274, two years after the death of his father.

The dictatorship of Simon de Montfort  
(1264-65)

Edward I, already an experienced man of thirty-five when he was crowned, proved to be an admirable king, famous not only for his conquests and his legal enactments but also for his unstained private life. An ardent knight and a loyal son of the church, he allowed neither romantic chivalry nor exaggerated piety to outweigh the practical demands of his office. He made good use of his excellent education, especially in the field of law and administration. His reputation for justice rivaled that of St. Louis. Throughout his life, despite a proud and ambitious temper, he strove to deserve the motto that was eventually carved on his tomb—*Pactum Serva*, Keep Troth. His enemies, and occasionally his subjects, found him a hard man; yet even his hardness, after the feeble rule of Henry III, might be accounted a political virtue. In many ways the reign of Edward I was to influence the whole future of England.

Edward I  
(1272-1307)

In an earlier connection we saw how the judicial reforms of Henry II inaugurated the English common law.<sup>14</sup> During the succeeding reigns, without regard to the fluctuations of foreign war, the system maintained a vigorous growth. Its basis was

<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 383.

The  
develop-  
ment  
of the  
common  
law

the series of writs<sup>15</sup> granted by the royal justices to persons who wished to have their suits tried in the king's court. And since new writs were devised at pleasure until the practice was stopped by an act of parliament under Edward I, the thirteenth century was a decisive period for the growth of the common law. In this respect the prohibitions of Magna Carta were of no avail; what the judges could not do under one form they did under another. As a consequence, the royal courts rapidly secured a monopoly of justice, with certain notable exceptions. Ecclesiastical courts still enjoyed extensive powers, especially in cases of marriage, wills, perjury, and, to a limited degree, criminal clerks.<sup>16</sup> Manorial courts continued to deal with matters of villeinage, for servile tenures were not protected by the king's law. The boroughs and certain other localities remained under their own peculiar customs for many centuries to come. Furthermore, a large number of barons asserted the right to exercise criminal jurisdiction of an inferior sort; but such claims were rigidly investigated under Edward I and allowed to stand only as a delegation from the monarchy.

The thirteenth century was also the age when the jury system was extended in many ways not contemplated by Henry II. In cases regarding the tenure of land, the question put to the jury was gradually changed, by interposing various preliminary motions, from a matter of possession to one of legal title. And as juries came to be employed for settling these and other disputes over civil rights, the men who were impaneled, instead of rendering a verdict on the basis of their own knowledge, had to learn the facts from the testimony of witnesses in open court. Under the original plan, criminals presented by a grand jury were sent to the ordeal. Then, in 1215, that method of trial was forbidden by Innocent III in his great Lateran Council. The English government, being thoroughly obedient to the papacy, thus had to devise a substitute, and eventually the practice was adopted of leaving the accused man's guilt or innocence to a special jury of twelve. It was a long time, however, before jury trials came to be governed by such elaborate rules as are enforced today.

<sup>15</sup> A writ is a brief order in writing issued by a court. Originally the writs were in Latin, and so many of them are still known by their first words in that language: for example, *certiorari*, *mandamus*, *scire facias*, *subpoena*, *habeas corpus*.

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 384.

By the time of Edward I there had also been a significant evolution of the English court system: as in France, the *curia regis* had tended to produce a series of distinct organizations, each endowed with peculiar functions. The first to take form was the exchequer, which not only kept the financial accounts of the kingdom, but also sat as a court of law to render judgment in fiscal cases. Earlier including all the great ministers of the crown headed by the chancellor, it came in the thirteenth century to have its own personnel under a chancellor of the exchequer—an official who is today an important member of the British cabinet. The second offshoot from the large *curia* was the court of common pleas, a separate body for the trial of cases between private citizens. Many suits to which the king was a party, however, followed him about until Edward I set up a permanent court to handle them, that of the king's bench. Thus were fixed at Westminster the three central courts of common law, which remained essentially unchanged until the nineteenth century. Some suits they heard by original jurisdiction; others came before them on appeal from the circuit courts, now definitely organized under justices on mission. And exceptional matters of all kinds could still be taken to the king for decision before his *curia*.

Edward I  
and the  
common  
law courts

Even in the time of Edward I, this was still a term of vague implication. On the one hand, it might refer to a small body of permanent advisers; on the other, it might be applied to the large assembly known as parliament. Between the two extremes there were a variety of gradations, depending on what persons happened to be summoned. In the absence of any definite law, much depended on the king's policy, and this, at any rate, is reasonably clear. Edward was interested in maintaining an efficient government under his personal control and in securing an ample revenue to support it. In particular, he was eager to establish his complete independence of the feudal class; so he would naturally adopt measures to broaden the political structure. For a long time the kings had made increasing use of the counties and boroughs in connection with the levying of taxes and all sorts of administrative business. Through the itinerant justices and other commissioners, constant negotiations had been kept up with both sets of communities. Such practices led by easy transition to the calling of deputies to meet with the king and his ministers. Although occasional assemblies of county representatives can be traced back to the early thirteenth century, Simon de

Edward I  
and parliament

Montfort was the first, as far as we know, to issue a summons also to the boroughs. Edward probably had no need of a precedent set by a rebel earl, for arrangements of this sort were being adopted all over Europe. Nevertheless, he followed it.

To his more important parliaments Edward called (1) the barons, greater and lesser, according to the method consecrated by Magna Carta; (2) knights of the shire, elected in the county courts; (3) burgesses, chosen in any way agreeable to the particular communities; (4) representatives of the lower clergy, both secular and regular. It should, however, be noted that these groups constituted four assemblies rather than one; that any of them could meet without the others; and that their respective powers remained vague. Edward's parliament of 1295 has been called the Model Parliament by historians because he then chanced to summon two knights from each shire and two burgesses from each borough—the scheme that became regular in the following century. Yet in his time this parliament was considered of no especial significance, and it was not, of course, organized into Lords and Commons. How the famous two-house legislature took form will be explained in a subsequent chapter; Edward knew nothing of it. He, in fact, had no concept of legislation as distinct from the issuing of executive ordinances or the rendering of judicial decisions. Although it has been customary to label certain enactments of his reign as statutes—and some of them are of great importance in the history of English law—that term as yet was not restricted to formal acts of parliament.

Edward's  
taxes

In the sphere of taxation Edward's practice was equally hazardous. Being a practical man in need of money, he sought to get it by any feasible plan, without regard for what future generations might turn into constitutional principles. While maintaining his right to the old tallage, scutage, and feudal aids, he frequently obtained from parliament special subsidies of a tenth, fifteenth, or other fraction of movable property throughout the kingdom. And in spite of papal protests, he was usually able to induce the clergy to contribute. At the same time he arbitrarily increased the customary duties on imports and exports by the so-called *maltote* (evil exaction). In 1297 parliamentary agitation compelled the king to grant a formal Confirmation of the Charters. Thereby he not only promised to observe Magna Carta as reissued under his father, but also abandoned the *maltote* and pledged himself to take no aids or other taxes without the com-

mon consent of the kingdom, "saving to the crown those aids and taxes anciently accustomed." Although the moral victory lay with parliament, it is hard to see just what the king gave up by this magnanimous article. Before long he had even regained some of his increased duties by separate negotiation with the foreign merchants. The really important consideration was that, by assuring the good will of the greatly amplified parliament, he could afford to drop old exactions that caused more trouble than they were worth. By the opening of the fourteenth century, the scutage and the tallage had been virtually superseded by more general subsidies. What was to be the basis of later constitutional government—parliamentary control of royal taxation—was already becoming an established fact.

In the meantime the king had been led to carry out the conquest of Wales. Earlier the mountainous peninsula between Bristol Channel and the Irish Sea had come to be divided politically into two main portions: the southeast under the Norman-English Lords Marchers,<sup>17</sup> and the northwest, under a Welsh prince who acknowledged himself the vassal of Henry III. In 1272 the prince of Wales was the ambitious but rather foolish Llewelyn. Having previously been the ally of Simon de Montfort, he absented himself from Edward's coronation and refused the accustomed homage. The king was thus given a good excuse for marching against him. A first campaign compelled Llewelyn to submit; a second one, after the prince had rebelled, ended in his death and the complete reduction of his principality. Since the time of Edward I, Wales has consequently formed part of England, divided into shires and subjected, with certain exceptions, to the English law. Only a memory of the country's separate existence was perpetuated by the title, Prince of Wales, henceforth borne by the king's eldest son.

The  
conquest  
of Wales  
(1276-84)

A more important result of the Welsh war was Edward's reform of the army. His conquest had been effected because he had made intelligent use of the navy furnished by the Cinque Ports,<sup>18</sup> and because he had been willing to abandon the feudal tradition of warfare. From actual experience in the field, Edward learned how to supplement an army of knights with light-armed troops, especially infantry. Above all, he discovered the

Military  
reform

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 377.

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 366.

efficiency of archers equipped with the long bow.<sup>19</sup> These military lessons, coinciding with the political motives already described, led him eventually to supersede the old feudal tenures by a system of voluntary enlistment and pay. How superior a fighting force the English army thus became was soon demonstrated in Scotland.

The  
conquest  
and loss of  
Scotland

Although the English kings had long claimed a vague overlordship in the north of Britain, Edward was the first of them to exercise any real authority there. His opportunity arose from a disputed succession to the throne in 1290. Being invited to arbitrate the affair by the chief contestants, Edward agreed to act on condition that each of them should recognize Scotland a fief of the English crown. This was formally done, and after a protracted investigation by a court representing all parties, Edward gave the kingdom to John Balliol in preference to a dozen other candidates. The new king, having duly performed his homage, was then shocked to find that his lord treated him as an actual vassal, even summoning him for military service in France, where war had broken out between Edward I and Philip IV.<sup>20</sup> With the enthusiastic backing of the Scots, Balliol refused to send a man and instead allied himself with the French king. Thereupon Edward marched north in 1296, forced Balliol to abdicate, and set up a government of his own. The victory was too easy. Rallying under the leadership of William Wallace, the Scots immediately overturned the English régime and challenged the foreigner to reconquer their country.

It was at this point, in 1298, that Edward and Philip agreed to a truce, dropping their unprofitable hostilities with each other and abandoning their respective allies. The result was another English conquest of Scotland. Before the end of the year 1298 Edward had again invaded the northern kingdom, and by using his long bows to prepare for a cavalry charge, had annihilated Wallace's army at Falkirk. The heroic outlaw was finally hunted down, but the English attempt to extend one system of government over all Britain proved a failure. In spite of defeat, the Scots refused to submit. Leading a new insurrection, Robert

<sup>19</sup> To use a short bow, the archer faces the target, holds the bow horizontally, and pulls the cord back to his chin. The long bow, on the other hand, is held vertically as the archer stands with his side to the target. It has an effective range of about three hundred yards.

<sup>20</sup> See the following section.

Bruce, grandson of an earlier claimant to the throne, had himself crowned king just before the death of Edward in 1307. That event assured his triumph, for Edward II was neither a general nor a statesman. Throwing away the military lessons of his father, he led an army across the border, only to suffer disaster at Bannockburn in 1314—a battle which established the complete independence of Scotland for the next three centuries.

### 3. PHILIP IV AND BONIFACE VIII

Louis IX, the saintly king, was succeeded in 1270 by his son, Philip III, whose reign of fifteen years witnessed few happenings of any significance. The death without heirs of the king's uncle, Alfonse of Poitiers, finally brought all Languedoc into the royal domain, and a fortunate marriage was arranged between the king's eldest son and Jeanne, heiress of Champagne and Navarre. Otherwise Philip's attention was chiefly given to the papal crusade against Aragon, the tragic conclusion of which has already been noted.<sup>21</sup> So in 1285 the crown passed to the king whom contemporaries called Philip the Fair. Aside from the fact that he was handsome, little is known of his personality, for he inspired no biographer and left no writings of his own except official documents couched in formal language. Whether he was a figurehead controlled by subordinates or a strong man who deliberately chose to efface himself is a question that is still being debated. In any case, the king was legally identified with an efficient and unscrupulous government which carried out a policy of great consequence both for France and for Europe as a whole.

The accession of Philip IV (1285)

With the accession of Philip IV, Champagne was absorbed into the royal domain. Of the other great fiefs two in particular were now destined to be the object of royal encroachment. To all practical intents, Flanders was a union of great self-governing cities. Their prosperity depended on the cloth industry, and that lived only by virtue of raw wool imported from England. As a consequence, the mass of the urban population, consisting largely of weavers and their apprentices,<sup>22</sup> favored a close alliance with the English king, while the landed aristocracy of town and country, fearing mob rule, tended to be strongly pro-French. The count was thus faced by an unhappy dilemma: if he antagonized the king of France, he would invite forfeiture and armed con-

The Flemish question

<sup>21</sup> See above, p. 544.

<sup>22</sup> See above, p. 502.



quest; if he antagonized the cities, he would lose the source of his wealth and political independence.

War with  
Edward I

The other territory to engage the constant attention of Philip IV was Guienne, the boundaries of which had been theoretically fixed by the peace of 1259. Actually, the English king had failed to obtain possession of many lands which he claimed as part of his duchy. Besides, there was continual friction over the French king's enforcement of appeals from Edward's discontented vassals. As long, in fact, as one proud and aggressive prince held a fief of another such prince, ill feeling between the two was bound to be chronic. It was not surprising, therefore, that an informal battle between the rival merchants of England and Normandy became the occasion for an open breach between the two governments. The war was short and indecisive; it is worth mentioning only because its complications helped to bring on a greater struggle in the following century. Edward naturally used political and economic pressure to secure an alliance with the count of Flanders; Philip retaliated by subsidizing Wallace's revolt in Scotland.

After 1298, when a truce was declared between the two kings, Flanders was left to bear the full brunt of Philip's hostility, and before long the entire county was occupied by the French. Nevertheless, if the king thought that he had thus easily brought another of the great fiefs into his domain, he was mistaken. In 1302 a riot begun by the weavers of Bruges suddenly attained the proportions of a revolution, breaking the power of the French governors and their aristocratic allies in most of the larger cities. Philip, of course, dispatched an army to punish the rebels, but it was overwhelmed and mercilessly slaughtered at Courtrai by the burgher militia—the first great victory of infantry over cavalry since the advent of the feudal age in Europe. The battle, to be sure, was merely the preliminary to other campaigns, in which the king fared somewhat better. Yet in 1305 he saw fit to restore the countship, and the old situation quickly reappeared, to lead before long to the outbreak of the so-called Hundred Years' War.

To a considerable degree, the reigns of Philip IV and Edward I had similar constitutional importance for their respective countries. In both we find much the same differentiation of governmental organs: the *chambre des comptes* corresponding to the exchequer, the *parlement* at Paris to the courts of king's bench and common pleas at Westminster, the Estates of France to the

parliament of England, with a royal council still holding an extensive residuary authority. In local administration the French *baillis* and *sénéchaux* resembled the English sheriffs; and the *enquêteurs*, especially after Philip had come to use them for routine business, were somewhat like the itinerant justices. Between the two systems there were, however, many differences. On the whole, French institutions at the close of the thirteenth century appear less sharply defined, and this effect is not entirely due to the lack of such great sets of records as have been preserved in England. Under the Capetians constitutional development had been slower than under the Norman-Angevin dynasty; functions of government therefore remained more fluctuating, and kings like Philip IV found it to their advantage to retain a greater latitude for personal intervention.

Comparison of the French and English governments

The most striking contrast between the two states arose from the fact that, whereas England had been conquered as a whole by its ruling house, France was built up piece by piece, as first one fief and then another was absorbed into the royal domain. Thus it came about that France had no common law and that, down to the great revolution of 1789, each province retained its own peculiar institutions. For example, in the time of Philip IV, Normandy still preserved the exchequer and other administrative bodies that had been created by the Norman dukes; in Champagne the central courts of the old counts continued to be held; and special commissions of royal judges were dispatched into Languedoc to administer the *droit écrit*, the written (i.e., Roman) law of that region. In England the king's military, judicial, and fiscal preeminence had been recognized for over two centuries; in France such powers had to be gradually revived. Philip's taxes and decrees had no validity in the great fiefs without the consent of the respective princes. Even within the territory that now constituted his domain there were scores of nobles and privileged communities that had to be separately dealt with, often at the cost of a stiff consideration.

Despite these difficulties, Philip IV was able, in one way or another, to reassert all the rights of monarchy that had been in abeyance since the collapse of the Carolingian Empire. The basis of this restored authority was his actual power as ruler over a wide and prosperous country, not belief in a theory. Yet his reign was given a certain characteristic tinge by the fact that he was surrounded by professional lawyers; laymen like Nogaret

The  
mercenary  
character  
of the  
royal  
adminis-  
tration

and Pierre Dubois<sup>23</sup> now took the place of the ecclesiastical advisers who had served his grandfather. Such men, inspired by their juristic studies to regard as paramount the needs of the state, made the king appear an impersonal force rather than a feudal chieftain. They likewise provided the elaborate show of legalism that covered all Philip's acts. To us, at any rate, the disguise seems rather thin. Too many of the judicial processes that marked his reign tended to precisely the same result—spoliation for the benefit of the crown. It is no mere coincidence that the notorious trial of the Templars<sup>24</sup> was accompanied by similar proceedings against the Jews and the Lombards.<sup>25</sup> Merely to engage in banking under Philip IV was to invite prosecution for treason or heresy.

The more closely we examine the royal administration at this time, the more mercenary it appears. Louis IX had caused an outcry from the holders of minting privileges by declaring his money valid throughout the whole kingdom and the sole legal tender in the royal domain; but his coinage had been honest and his rates of exchange for gold and silver pieces had been reasonable. Philip not only debased his coins but at the same time raised their legal value in terms of *deniers* and *sous*.<sup>26</sup> No state—even in the twentieth century—can become wealthy by multiplying theoretical pennies, and eventually Philip had to fall back on taxation. At one time or another the king tried almost every known expedient for raising money: he levied feudal aids, tallaged the towns, obtained special grants from the movables of clergy and nobility, extorted loans and gifts, exacted increased tolls, laid an impost on sales (the French *maltote*), and, in order to substitute cash equivalents, revived the Carolingian principle that every able-bodied subject owed him military service. But the collection of these taxes caused him endless trouble, sometimes leading to sanguinary riots. It was only toward the end of the reign that Philip learned the advantage of securing subsidies by grant of representative assemblies called for that purpose.

Throughout western Europe it had long been the established

<sup>23</sup> See below, p. 659.

<sup>24</sup> See below, p. 573.

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 504.

<sup>26</sup> See above, p. 355. It would have been an equivalent action if our government had declared the gold half-eagle to be worth six silver dollars or six hundred copper cents. The same result, of course, is obtained by giving less gold for five hundred cents.

custom that, except perhaps in certain cases, a prince could tax his noble tenants only by their consent, and this was normally sought from them as a body when assembled in a great court. The same treatment, as a matter of legal necessity, was accorded the clergy when they came to be asked for occasional subsidies. For taxation, as well as for general consultation, two orders or estates had thus definitely appeared by the later thirteenth century. Meanwhile the towns, as privileged communities, had been dealt with individually, being visited by princely agents whenever they were required to pay an aid or otherwise to cooperate with the administration. Eventually, however, it was found more convenient to consult them through deputies whom they sent to a central meeting. And since there is every reason to suppose that such procedure had often been informally adopted before it became a regular and official usage, it is rather idle to speculate just when and how a Third Estate first arose.

The system of Estates

Frederick II, we know, provided that representatives of the bourgeoisie should attend the council held for his Sicilian kingdom or for one of its component provinces. Within another generation the *cortes* of Catalonia and of the Spanish states had regularly come to have as one of their elements deputies from the towns. By the close of the century very similar practices had been developed in many other regions, including the kingdoms of England, France, and Germany, and various principalities in the latter two countries. The first well-authenticated meeting of Estates for all France was in 1302, when Philip summoned representatives of the towns, as well as the barons and the clergy, to one great central meeting. But consultations with smaller groups had been held earlier, and the more normal procedure in fourteenth-century France was to call Estates for separate provinces, such as Normandy and Languedoc. How the constitutional importance of all these assemblies grew in direct proportion to the fiscal needs of the princes will be seen in the following chapter. Here another phase of the subject demands attention: how the powerful monarchies of western Europe became embroiled with the papacy.

Philip IV's accession to the throne had come just after the death of Martin IV.<sup>27</sup> Since that pope had in every way shown himself an ardent friend of the Capetians, the failure of his policy

<sup>27</sup> See above, p. 541.

Boniface  
VIII  
(1294-  
1303)

naturally produced an anti-French reaction, which was seized upon by certain Italian families to advance their own selfish interests. So, under various short-lived successors, the cardinals came to be rather sharply divided into two factions devoted to the rival houses of Colonna and Orsini. Some of them, however, still remained openly attached to the French cause, and as long as the Roman church continued to be involved in the Sicilian project, it had to preserve its alliance with the Angevins of Naples. This was the situation when, in 1294, the papal office was abdicated by Celestine V, a saintly hermit who for five months had vainly tried to enforce a semblance of authority. He was succeeded by the energetic but equally unfortunate Boniface VIII.

The new pope, before his election, had long been outstanding as Cardinal Benedict Gaetani. He was unquestionably a man of considerable ability, especially in law and in business administration. As papal legate in France, he had gained the ill will of many influential persons and his election was consequently opposed by the French cardinals, but he received the votes of both the Orsini and Colonna factions. Subsequently all sorts of scandalous charges were leveled against him, ranging from atheism to moral turpitude. There is no reason to take such accusations for more than the usual invective of fierce partisanship. Judged by his own words and acts, Boniface appears rather a misguided enthusiast than a monster of corruption. The ideals to which he gave his passionate devotion were those of his office, consecrated by centuries of tradition. The means he took to serve his ends differed in no essential from those of his predecessors. To a large degree he was the victim of circumstances, being made to suffer merely for the upholding of long-established principles. On the other hand, it must be admitted that Boniface was no statesman. He was utterly lacking in the tact demanded by his position. Having no real understanding of men, he failed to grasp the realities of any situation. With him, violence of affirmation seemed always to take the place of intelligent thought.

The first two years of Boniface's pontificate passed quietly. Then, by the bull *Clericis Laicos*,<sup>28</sup> he suddenly forbade all secular princes to levy any taxes on the clergy without papal authorization. This act, directed primarily against the subsidies which the kings of France and England were then raising for their

The first  
quarrel  
with  
Philip IV  
(1296-97)

<sup>28</sup> The formal decrees of the pope are called bulls and are commonly known by the first few words of the Latin text.

war, was based on good ecclesiastical theory. Yet the event proved that the pope was in no position to enforce his prohibition. While Edward outlawed all who disobeyed him, Philip stopped the exportation of gold and silver from his dominions and so, indirectly, cut off a considerable portion of the papal revenue. Within a year Boniface had first modified and then rescinded his decree. Nor was this all. Reversing his previous attitude, he proceeded to treat the French government with the utmost consideration. The reason, obviously, lay in the "crusades" which he was then pressing on two sides. One he inherited from his predecessors—the vain effort to reestablish the Angevin authority throughout the kingdom of Sicily and to punish the house of Aragon for its presumptuous opposition. The other was a war of Boniface's own making—a feud with the Colonna family, which resented the pope's aggressive acts for the benefit of his relatives.

Having forced the Colonna chiefs to submit, Boniface in 1300 celebrated the opening of the new century with a great jubilee at Rome. Enormous throngs of pilgrims poured into his capital from all regions of Christendom, and this apparent evidence of universal ascendancy seems to have heightened his already exalted concept of the papal office. At least, he now acted as if he were in truth the dictator of Europe. Even while calling upon Charles of Valois, younger brother of Philip IV, to overturn a hostile government at Florence<sup>20</sup> and reconquer Sicily, Boniface saw fit to bring on a second quarrel with the French king. Again the pope took his stand on solid legal ground—the defense of a bishop against arbitrary judgment in a lay court. But he wrecked all hope of a peaceable settlement by gratuitously issuing a bull that revived the claims of *Clericis Laicos* and by following that with another, *Ausculta Fili* (Listen, My Son!), which the French could not fail to regard as an insult.

The  
second  
quarrel  
with  
Philip IV  
(1301-03)

Philip's reply was to summon, in 1302, the great assembly of clergy, nobility, and bourgeoisie that is known in the history of France as the first meeting of the Estates General. Although the king got from it the support that he asked, the effect was overbalanced, in the eyes of the pope, by the Flemish victory at Courtrai. So Boniface did not hesitate to continue his offensive with the bull *Unam Sanctam*. All must believe, it is there pro-

<sup>20</sup> See below, p. 685.

claimed, in one Holy Catholic Apostolic Church, outside which there is no salvation. This one true church has only one head, namely Christ, who is represented on earth by the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter. The two swords spoken of in the Gospel are the spiritual power and the temporal power. Both belong to the church. "The former is to be used by the church, the latter for the church; the one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and knights, but at the command and permission of the priest." "If the temporal power errs, it will be judged by the spiritual power, and if the lower spiritual power errs, it will be judged by its superior. But if the highest spiritual power errs, it cannot be judged by men, but by God alone." Whoever resists God's vicar resists God. "We therefore declare, say, and affirm that submission on the part of every man to the bishop of Rome is altogether necessary for his salvation."

The  
incident  
of Anagni  
(1303)

The sequel to this pontifical utterance would have been ludicrous had it not been so tragic. While the French government was formally accusing the pope of the most shocking crimes and demanding his trial before a general council of the church, Nogaret, one of the king's ablest and most unscrupulous ministers, went to Italy and joined hands with certain vindictive members of the Colonna faction. Gathering a small army of Boniface's personal enemies, they broke into Anagni, where the pope happened to be, and arrested him. Then, in the face of growing hostility, they abandoned whatever project had at first been contemplated, and Boniface was left to be escorted back to Rome by a group of his friends. The blow to the aged man's pride, however, was more than he could survive. Completely broken in mind and spirit, he died one month after his release, in October, 1303. Such a disgraceful affair was in itself no moral victory for the French king. That Philip was able to turn it to his advantage is sufficient proof of the discredit into which the papacy had already fallen.

Clement V  
(1305-14)

To succeed Boniface, an Italian of high character was at once installed, but his efforts at compromise were ended by his death in the following year. Then, after a protracted vacancy, the papal office was conferred on the archbishop of Bordeaux, who assumed the name of Clement V. If some had expected him, as a vassal of the English king, to be unfriendly to Philip, they were quickly disillusioned, for he quashed the offending decrees of Boniface

VIII, and gave full absolution to those who had attacked the pope at Anagni. Meanwhile, Clement, for one reason or another, had continually postponed his expected journey to Rome. He had first celebrated his coronation at Lyons and then summoned a council at Vienne in Dauphiné. Temporarily the papal residence was established at Avignon, a city belonging to the Angevin count of Provence, but practically surrounded by the papal territory of the Venaissin.<sup>30</sup> And although Clement may have been honest enough in his declared intention of going to Rome, that project was negated by his appointment of fourteen new cardinals, all but one of them Frenchmen. Whether partisans of Philip IV or not, they were agreed in disliking Italy. The momentary halt at Avignon lapsed into a continuous residence.

One cause for the papal delay on or near French soil was the trial of the Templars, which dragged its scandalous course through the years between 1307 and the pope's death in 1314. That order, since the fall of Acre in 1291, had of necessity lost its crusading functions; yet through extensive banking operations it continued to accumulate wealth. It was a secret organization, surrounded by much mystery. Its members lived in luxury and many of them were devoted to worldly interests. Earlier popes had suggested combination with the Hospitallers, who were still engaged in charitable work, but the Templars objected and so gave a certain color to the charges made against them. In 1307 Clement was prevailed on to authorize an investigation, and when Philip ordered the arrest of all Templars in France and placed Nogaret in charge of securing adequate confessions by the use of torture, the case was virtually decided in advance. A tale of horrid deeds was gradually drawn up by the royal commissioners, acting in collaboration with the Inquisition, and some scores of unfortunate victims were sent to the stake as relapsed heretics. Finally, after much hesitation, the pope removed the case from his council at Vienne and abolished the order.

The affair  
of the  
Templars  
(1307-14)

By the terms of the papal decree, the property of the Templars, except in the Spanish peninsula, was to go to the Hospitallers, but they found it difficult to enforce their rights. In France the cash wealth of the condemned order had already been appropriated by the king, whose grasp on such assets never relaxed. Even the Templars' lands had been brought under royal occupation,

<sup>30</sup> It had earlier belonged to the count of Toulouse and had fallen to the pope in connection with the final disposition of Languedoc; see above, p. 549.



and before they could be obtained by the beneficiaries the latter had to pay under the head of expenses what amounted to a good price. As a whole, the affair served, even in the eyes of contemporaries, to advertise the decadence of the papacy and the ruthless greed of the French monarchy.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

#### I. THE RUSSIANS AND THE TARTAR CONQUEST

WHAT we, from our western point of view, think of as an eastern country is a central country to its natives, for geographically they can find little significance in such a fictitious line as that separating Europe from Asia. And historically the Slavic lands have lain between two great offensive movements: from one direction that of the Germans, from the other that of the nomads. Within this central area the people known as Russians emerged from obscurity along the valley of the Dnieper. The name, at first applied to a band of viking adventurers, gradually came to denote the Slavs whom they conquered and by whom they were eventually assimilated. In the eleventh century Russia had already become a wide territory subordinated to the dynasty of Vladimir at Kiev.<sup>1</sup> Northward it extended to the gulf of Finland, eastward it included the upper Volga, and westward it reached the Carpathians, where it adjoined the states of Hungary and Poland. Along the Baltic its neighbors were the Prussians, Lithuanians, Letts, and other heathen tribes. Between it and the Black Sea was spread the great steppe, the home of many nomadic hordes, of which the latest to arrive were the Cumans (see map, page 635).

Russia in  
the twelfth  
century

The coming of this barbarous nation had important consequences, for to a large extent it broke the intimate trade relations between Kiev and Constantinople. Although Russian civilization remained fundamentally Byzantine, the northern country was henceforth left to develop its institutions in greater isolation. The blocking of the old trade route down the Dnieper also brought inevitable decline to the capital, which coincided with the weakening of the sovereign house. During the twelfth century what had been a well-centralized state broke up into a series of warring principalities under the descendants of Vladimir. Kiev remained the religious and cultural center, but in commercial prosperity and political strength leadership now passed to outlying terri-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 322.

stories: Galicia in the southwest, Novgorod in the extreme north, and the adjacent valley of the Volga to the east. This was the situation when a new storm of destructive fury gathered on the Asiatic plateau.

The  
Mongols  
under  
Jenghis  
Khan  
(1206-27)

Time and again in the previous centuries nomadic hordes, striking outward from their barren homelands, had threatened with ruin all the countries in their path. The Huns, Avars, Bulgars, and Magyars had in turn emerged from the same source, to gain a horrid renown for pillage and massacre. The Turks also, before they became famous as the soldiers of Islam, had for countless generations driven herds across the plains of Turkestan. In fact, many Turkish tribes, untouched by civilization, still inhabited that region in the time of Saladin. Adjoining them on the east were two kindred peoples, whose very names remain the subject of controversy: the Tartars (properly Tatars) and the Mongols. A certain chief among the latter, about 1160, called his new-born son Temujin—an event unheralded in either Christian or Mohammedan countries. Yet they were to know the boy's name only too well. Inheriting from his father a contest with many rivals, Temujin proved himself an able commander by defeating them all. In 1206 he was proclaimed as Jenghis Khan (Universal King), and within twenty years his armies had brought massacre and destruction to an incredible expanse of territory.

Earlier the Chinese had regarded Mongolia as a tributary province. Jenghis Khan now reversed the situation by invading the great oriental empire, ravaging its northern provinces, and overturning the royal dynasty at Peking. On the west, meanwhile, his rapid subjection of Turkestan brought him into collision with a prince named Mohammed, who ruled as *shah* over a vast region lying between the Tigris and the Indus. Inside two years Mohammed was a fugitive in India and his dominions lay helpless before the Mongol hordes. Their advance was like that of the Huns or the Magyars, but on an infinitely greater scale. Jenghis Khan's resources of men seemed limitless, for as his forces swept across the Asiatic plateau their ranks were constantly swelled by the accession of new recruits—of other desert warriors who needed no equipment except a horse and a saber, and who fought without pay, seeking merely the loot of conquered lands. Raiding parties first scoured the country far in advance of the main host, to feel out the enemy and to prepare the resident population, by a foretaste of terror, for abject surrender. When

the actual occupation began, communities that immediately submitted and agreed to pay regular tribute were spared; those which put up even the slightest resistance were pitilessly slaughtered. Thus, as the Mongols overran Persia, their trail was marked by piles of corpses and the ruins of what had been flourishing cities.

Jenghis Khan died in 1227, leaving to one of his sons, Ogdai, an empire that extended from the Pacific to the Caspian. Some years earlier a preliminary expedition to the Russian steppe had announced a future offensive in Europe. This was launched in 1237, when the Mongols overpowered the feeble resistance of the princes along the upper Volga and conquered the whole region, with the exception of Novgorod. In 1240, after Kiev had been taken and its inhabitants butchered, southern Russia suffered the same fate. Next the invaders fell upon the helpless monarchies of Poland and Hungary, but relief came with a disputed succession to the khanate in 1242. As Batu, the general who had commanded the western drive, was then recalled, central Europe was saved from further depredations. Finally, in 1251, undisputed authority was secured by Mangu, a grandson of Jenghis Khan, and under him the Mongol advance was vigorously resumed. While one brother, Kublai, pushed into southern China, a second brother, Hulagu, struck westward into Mesopotamia.

The successors of Jenghis Khan

There, to the horror of the Islamic world, he took Bagdad in 1258 and, amid scenes of unparalleled carnage, slew the last of its famous caliphs. The Mongols had already subjugated the Armenians and the Seljuks of Asia Minor; now it seemed as if nothing could prevent their occupation of Syria. While the Christians were making puny efforts to hold a bit of the Mediterranean coast, the great khan was completing the subjection of one continent and threatening two others. At the critical moment, however, Hulagu's forces were surprised by a sudden counter-offensive from Egypt. In that country the last of the sultans descended from Saladin had been overthrown by a revolution during the crusade of St. Louis—an event which brought to supreme power the commander of the Mamelukes, the slaves who constituted the palace guard. It was a Mameluke leader who was fortunate enough in 1260 to defeat the Mongols, and his successor by murder, one Bibars, made good use of his victory. While driving the nomads out of Syria and carrying on a successful war against the crusaders, he set up an Abbasid refugee as

The end of the Bagdad caliphate and the rise of the Mamelukes

caliph in his own capital of Cairo and so established a régime that lasted into the sixteenth century.

Kublai  
Khan  
(1259-94)

Meanwhile, in 1259, Mangu had been succeeded by Kublai, during whose reign of thirty-five years the Mongol power reached its height. Having extended his sovereignty over all China, Kublai fixed his principal residence in that country and adopted for himself and his court the standards of its ancient culture. He was thus far removed from the barbarism of his ancestors; by virtue of his wise and tolerant rule, as well as by the vastness of his empire, he occupies a prominent place in Asiatic history. Yet to Europeans he has always been chiefly famous for his patronage of the great Venetian traveler, Marco Polo.<sup>2</sup> It was indeed marvelous that, through the protection of one man, an Italian trader could journey unmolested from the Black Sea to Peking and back again—a situation which had never existed before and which disappeared with the passing of Kublai Khan. Even in his day the Mongol dominions had no true political unity, and in the fourteenth century, as the great khan ceased to be formidable, they naturally broke apart under rival dynasties. For example, the descendents of Kublai governed China until they were ousted by a native uprising; those of Hulagu, turned Moslem, long held the sovereignty of Persia; those of Batu headed the western tribes whom the Russians called the Golden Horde.

The  
Tartar  
dominion  
in Russia

The chief of these Tartars, as they were always known in Europe, had his headquarters on the Volga. Thither went the tribute which the khan's agents demanded from the subject population. Otherwise all matters of administration were left to the local princes, but they had to obtain formal investment from the Horde and pay roundly for the privilege. It was only when these conditions were not met that the Tartars reasserted their sovereignty with fire and sword. Consequently, although the Russians were despoiled and humiliated, neither their religion nor

<sup>2</sup> Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, Venetian merchants at Constantinople, were drawn by trade to the Crimea and thence eventually to the court of Kublai. Having been sent by the khan with a request for Christian missionaries, they started back in 1271 with two Dominican friars. Marco, the young son of Nicolo, accompanied them. The missionaries soon quit the expedition, but Marco made the trip to China, where he lived for over ten years, enjoying great favor with the khan. It was not until 1295 that the Polos again saw Venice. Three years later Marco was taken by the Genoese in the course of a naval engagement, and to while away his captivity he dictated to a fellow prisoner the famous account of his travels in the orient—the first description of eastern Asia to be written by a European. The original edition was in French.

their other national traditions were interfered with. The Tartars even helped to create the central organization that was eventually to usurp their authority altogether. This was the Grand Principality of Moscow. Hitherto obscure, Moscow in the fourteenth century became the virtual center of all the Tartar dominions in Russia when its prince obtained from the khan the right to collect his taxes. Then, in the fifteenth century, the Horde finally dissolved, and Muscovy emerged as an independent state, the nucleus of a revived Russian Empire. As had often happened in the past, it was the Slavs, rather than their conquerors, who thrived and multiplied.

Great Russia, which thus came to be subordinated to Moscow, did not, however, include all the territory that had earlier been ruled from Kiev. To the north Novgorod continued to be independent of the Tartars, and then of the Muscovites until the close of the Middle Ages. Originally a territorial principality, it was gradually changed, through the rise of a wealthy aristocracy, into a city-state somewhat resembling Venice, for it became virtually a republic with a prince who was little more than an honorary magistrate. The basis of Novgorod's prosperity was commerce, principally in furs. Situated on the easternmost tributary of the Baltic, where great marshes made it almost immune from attack, the town was the natural meeting-point of traders coming from the west by sea, from the south by the Dnieper, from the east by the Volga, and from the north—a great hunting region—by the Neva. But the men of Novgorod did not themselves engage in foreign enterprise by ship and caravan; they served almost exclusively as middlemen between the Russians, Finns, and Tartars on the one side and the Germans of the Hansa<sup>3</sup> on the other. For a long time the city remained the leading financial center of eastern Europe. Its decline came only toward the end of the fifteenth century, when it was finally subjected by the princes of Moscow.

The  
republic of  
Novgorod

In Russian history the period of Tartar domination is likewise noteworthy for the encroachment of western states on the territory once ruled by Vladimir. In the twelfth century one of the principalities to grow at the expense of Kiev was Galicia. Even under the tyranny of the Golden Horde the region for a time retained its prominence; then, being widely separated from Great

Polish and  
Lithuanian  
conquests  
in Russia

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 585 f.

Russia, it gradually came under the influence of Poland and was annexed by that kingdom in 1347. Meanwhile another power had appeared on the scene to profit by the weakening of its eastern neighbor. This was Lithuania which, from obscure beginnings on the Baltic, started a rapid expansion to the southward in the thirteenth century. First the Lithuanian kings overran what is known as White Russia, essentially the valleys of the Niemen and the Pripet. Subsequently, on the collapse of the Tartar dominion, they extended their conquests down the Dnieper to include the whole of Little Russia and the Ukraine—a circumstance that helped to identify Moscow with the national cause. The further significance of Lithuanian development can be better appreciated in connection with the history of Poland and the Baltic peoples.

## 2. GERMAN EXPANSION ON THE BALTIC

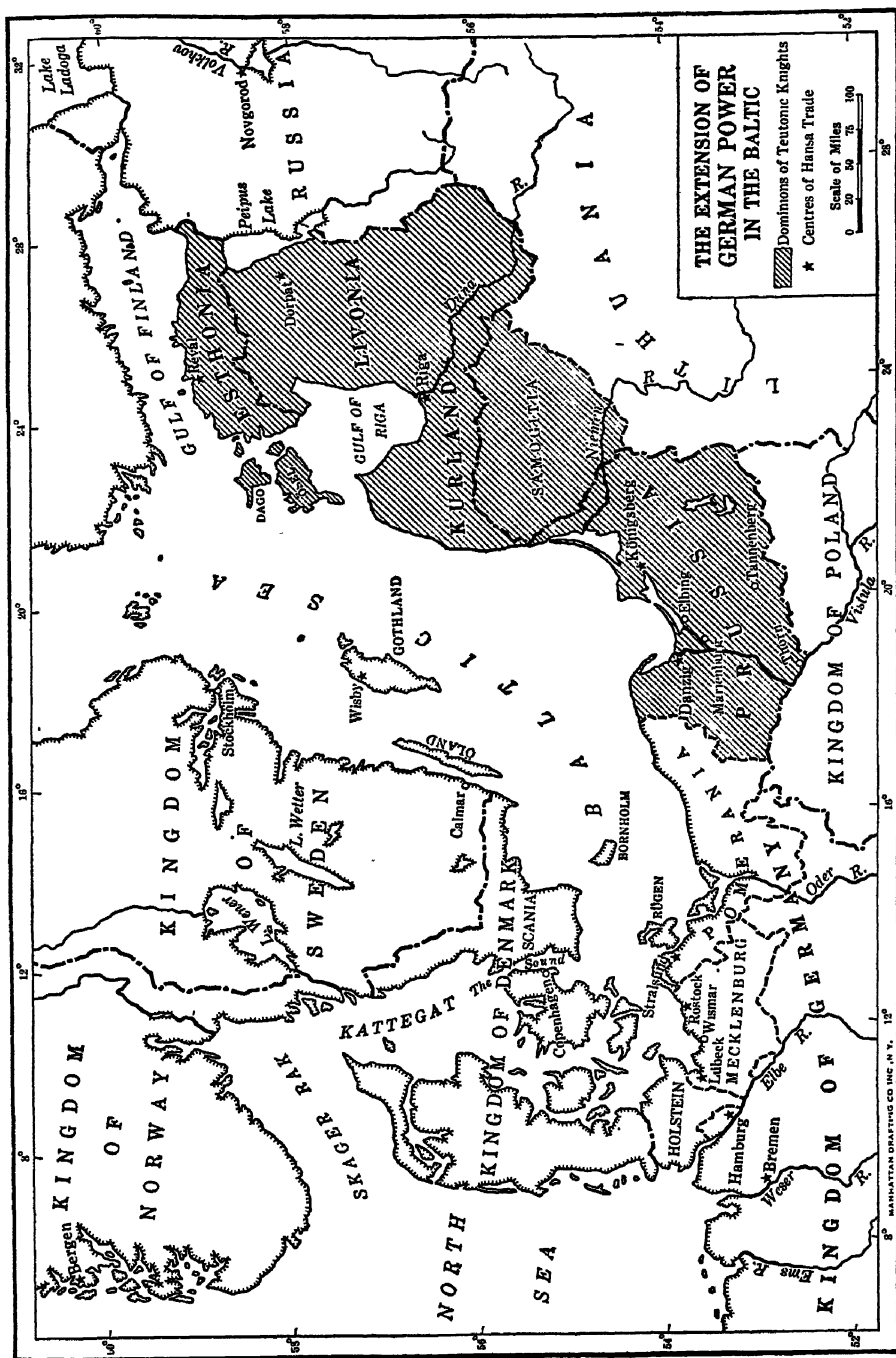
The  
strategic  
importance  
of  
the Baltic  
coast

With the near-extinction of the Holy Roman Empire in the thirteenth century, German influence in Italy disappeared, and to the westward, throughout the entire strip of borderlands, it steadily yielded before French aggression. To the eastward, on the contrary, the Germans continued to advance, winning even more brilliant victories in the fields of economic and cultural enterprise than in those of military conflict. The chief agency in this connection was not the kingship, which ceased to have more than local authority; rather it was individual barons and cities, or associations of them, that carried forward the projects launched by Charlemagne. On the Danube front a strong barrier against German penetration existed in the Hungarian state which, by the incorporation of Croatia, had come to extend from the Adriatic to the Carpathians. And although Bohemia had been definitely brought under imperial influence, the anti-German barrier was extended from the Carpathians to the valley of the Vistula by the Poles, whose kings had renounced the homage exacted by Frederick Barbarossa.<sup>4</sup> The critical region for the Slavic defense was therefore Pomerania and the heathen lands beyond it.

By 1200, through the colonizing activity of Henry the Lion and his associates,<sup>5</sup> western Pomerania had already been Germanized and the Polish hold on the rest of the district had been greatly

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp. 589 f.

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 404 f.





weakened. Across the Vistula and reaching to the Dwina lay the country of the Prussians, Lithuanians, and Letts—three related peoples whose languages, though Indo-European, were neither Slavic nor Germanic. Their neighbors to the east were the Finnish<sup>6</sup> tribes of Livs, Kurs, and Esths. Upon the territories which thus became known as Prussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Livonia, Kurland, and Esthonia were directed missionary efforts from many directions; for Scandinavians, Russians, Poles, and Germans all perceived the strategic importance of a region that included the mouths of three great rivers. Yet, at the opening of the thirteenth century, little progress had been made in overcoming the stubborn resistance of the heathen population. Then a series of German advances revolutioned the situation.

The  
Brothers  
of the  
Sword in  
Livonia

In 1201 Albert, missionary bishop in Livonia, organized a pioneering expedition from Lübeck, and by its aid founded the town of Riga. Next, finding his military resources inadequate for the task ahead, he established a new crusading order, the Brothers of the Sword, which was sanctioned by Innocent III. Through it Albert was able to carry out a remarkable work. With the support of the Christianized Livs and Letts, his knights conquered Esthonia in the face of bitter opposition from the Danes of the adjacent islands and from the Russians of Novgorod. On the other side, however, the Lithuanians resisted every effort at conversion and before long, as we have seen, were engaged in successful offensives of their own. Meanwhile the Prussians, too, were making themselves very objectionable to their Christian neighbors, and to remedy this situation, the operations of the Livonian Brothers now came to be seconded by the Teutonic Knights.

The  
Teutonic  
Knights in  
Prussia

This famous order, modeled after the Templars and Hospitalers, had originally been created in the course of Frederick Barbarossa's crusade. For a time it fought only in the Holy Land. Then its energies were in part diverted to sacred projects in Hungary, and finally by the authorization of the papacy in 1230, it was allowed to take charge of the war against the heathen in Prussia. There the Teutonic Knights won a tremendous success, subduing, Christianizing, and to a large extent colonizing the whole strip of coast as far as the Niemen. And before this process had been completed, the Livonian order asked

<sup>6</sup> The Finns constitute one division of the peoples classified by their languages as Ural-Altaic; see above, p. 48.

to join the older and greater organization. The union, confirmed by the pope, was effected in 1237 and shortly afterwards, through the occupation of Kurland, the territories of the two orders were brought together geographically as well as politically. A campaign launched against the Russians, it is true, utterly failed, and the Lithuanians still remained formidable; but the triumph of the Teutonic Knights assured German supremacy along the southern shore of the Baltic.

The next hundred years were spent by the victors in consolidating their position. In cooperation with the Hansa, self-governing towns were founded for the benefit of German merchants all through the conquered territory. Devastated lands and the wilderness of the interior were settled by German peasants. On all sides fiefs were erected to be held by German barons and German clergy. The failure of the crusading movement elsewhere served only to enhance the prestige of an order that could still offer enthusiasts and adventurers a chance to fight for the Cross.<sup>7</sup> In 1309, while the Templars were being brought to ruin in France, the Teutonic Knights transferred their entire organization to the north. There, in the absence of effective control by the weakening papacy, the order acted very much as it pleased, enjoying sovereign authority over the new state which it had created. This work has never been undone. As the native population was killed off or assimilated, Prussia became a German country, and so it remains today.

Such an eventuality, of course, was not contemplated by the Poles who had originally appealed for aid against the heathen. If their own monarchy had then possessed any vitality, the Teutonic Knights might never have secured their foothold on the Vistula. Poland, however, had fallen into a condition of such paralysis that over a hundred years passed before either king or princes took any effective action to impede the German expansion along the coast. It was not until the fourteenth century that a royal revival once more brought Poland to the rank of a power in central Europe. The reigns of Ladislas I and Casimir the Great (1306-70) restored the unity of the kingdom, gave it a new constitution, and pushed its frontiers southward to include Galicia; but they failed to change the situation on the Baltic. The event that led to the undoing of the Teutonic Knights came

The  
Polish-  
Lithuanian  
Union  
(1386)

<sup>7</sup> E.g., the knight in Chaucer's prologue, below, p. 702.

sixteen years later, when the heiress of the Polish crown<sup>8</sup> was married to Jagiello, grand duke of Lithuania.

From the Slavic point of view, this alliance was a diplomatic victory of the first magnitude. Jagiello, who was renamed Ladislas II, now accepted Christianity, and as his people followed suit, they rapidly came under the influence of Polish civilization. Furthermore, with the Lithuanian dynasty, which had successfully withstood the Teutonic Knights for a century and a half, the Poles obtained the leadership and resources for a decisive anti-German offensive. From the first the new king's policy was dictated by hostility to the Prussian order. Jagiello's father had not only defended his northern frontier, but had driven the Tartars from the valley of the Dnieper and so brought his dominion to the shore of the Black Sea. Jealousies among the Lithuanian princes had then permitted the Knights to take Samogitia, to regain which was Jagiello's primary objective. By a wise family settlement he assured the hearty cooperation of his relatives in the common cause, and by accepting Christianity he destroyed the remaining justification for a crusading order on the Baltic. On their side, the Knights were now handicapped by political dissension and a declining morale—the evil consequences of their material prosperity. It was not surprising, therefore, that they suffered irretrievable defeat on the field of Tannenberg in 1410.

The fall  
of the  
Teutonic  
Knights  
(1410–66)

Although the intervention of Hungary and other jealous neighbors limited the victors' claims to the restoration of Samogitia, the Prussian order never regained its power. Losing the moral support of Europe, it was reduced to the inadequate defense of mercenary troops and was soon helpless against its own rebellious subjects. Under these circumstances, Jagiello's grandson<sup>9</sup> was able to complete the Polish-Lithuanian triumph by dictating the Peace of Thorn in 1466. According to its terms, Poland annexed all West Prussia, together with additions beyond the Vistula. East Prussia remained in the possession of the Knights, but as a Polish fief for which the Grand Master was to perform homage. Thereupon the Brothers of the Sword declared their independence and resumed sovereign control over Livonia and Esthonia. The closing years of the fifteenth century thus found the German power in full retreat on the Baltic, while Poland, ex-

<sup>8</sup> See below, p. 593.

<sup>9</sup> Casimir IV, son of Ladislas III, who was slain at Varna; see below, p. 602.

tending its influence to Bohemia and Hungary, had assumed the leadership of Europe in opposing the advance of the Ottoman Turks.

To a large degree, obviously, the rise of the Teutonic Knights was due to the absence of powerful states along the southern shore of the Baltic. The same factor was principally responsible for the contemporary development of another great German institution, the league of towns known as the Hansa. The name had no peculiar significance, being often applied in northern countries to any gild or association of merchants. At London, for example, the men of Cologne<sup>10</sup> had enjoyed special privileges since long before the Norman Conquest, and when their *hansa* was confirmed by Henry II in the twelfth century, it had already been joined by traders from other cities on the Rhine. Similarly, with the extension of German commerce throughout the Baltic, Lübeck<sup>11</sup> became the center of a growing confederation which came to include the neighboring towns of Hamburg, Stralsund, and Rostock, as well as the German colony of Wisby on the Swedish island of Gothland. By the later thirteenth century this group, or some of its members, had secured valuable concessions in many quarters, notably in connection with the fur trade of Russia, the cloth trade of Flanders, and the fish trade of Norway and Sweden. When, by mutual agreement, the western and eastern groups of German towns pooled their interests and perfected an organization to administer their common affairs, the combination became *par excellence* the Hansa.

The origin  
of the  
Hansa

As the league finally emerged in the fourteenth century, it included all the larger imperial towns situated on rivers flowing into the Baltic or the North Sea, together with Danzig, Königsberg, Riga, Reval, Dorpat, and other new foundations in Prussia, Livonia, and Esthonia. It maintained factories—permanent trading establishments, with warehouses and docks—at Novgorod, Bruges, Bergen, and London, in each of which places it enjoyed a virtually exclusive trade in Baltic products. Such a league was the more necessary for the merchants of Germany because the collapse of the monarchy had left them without an official protector, and, except by cooperative enterprise among the older centers, the maintenance of isolated settlements in the wilds be-

Extent  
and or-  
ganization

<sup>10</sup> See above, pp. 348, 352.

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 405.

yond the Vistula would have been quite impossible. The Hansa, however, was not a political, much less a national, organization. Held together solely by mercantile interest, it had no formal constitution, no common seal, no official head, and no capital. Its only organ of government was a congress which met at a convenient place whenever the need arose for extraordinary measures. On such occasions Lübeck, by virtue of commercial preeminence, was normally deputed to speak for the confederation and so came to be generally regarded as its chief. Cologne ranked second and was followed, in no fixed order, by Hamburg, Bremen, and Wisby. We sometimes hear of a Hanseatic congress representing well over fifty towns, but the lesser communities rarely bothered to send deputies and no list of members was ever published.

The Hansa, therefore, was merely what it pretended to be—a trading association for mutual benefit. The only penalty which it could inflict on a rebellious member was exclusion from the monopolies controlled by the league: the herring fisheries of the Danish Sound, the export of fur from Russia, the import of northern products into Flanders, and the like. Conversely, its power to maintain such privileges abroad lay in its ability to withhold shipping from a recalcitrant port. It was by an embargo on all trade with the Baltic that Bruges in 1307 and Novgorod in 1392 were forced to submit to its terms. Normally the same weapons sufficed to maintain favorable relations with foreign princes. If, for example, the king of Norway broke with the Hansa, the local trade in codfish would be ruined and he would at once lose a large fraction of his cash income. So Edward I of England was willing, in return for increased tolls from the Hanseatic merchants, to grant them enhanced liberties in the Steelyard, their factory at London. The Hansa encountered formidable opposition in only one direction—from the reinvigorated kingdom of Denmark.

After the days of Canute the Great,<sup>12</sup> the Scandinavian countries ceased to play a leading part in European affairs for over two hundred years. As if exhausted by the outpouring of their ablest men in the viking age, they fell back into the relative obscurity of a peaceful existence, broken only by minor wars over the succession to their respective thrones. To the historian of

The Scan-  
dinavian  
kingdoms

<sup>12</sup> See above, pp. 282 f.

Scandinavia the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are chiefly interesting because they finally established throughout the north the more familiar institutions of France and Germany: the church with its Latin education; feudalism with all its military, social, and legal implications; town life with its guilds and other bourgeois customs; new standards in royal administration, new styles in architecture, new modes of literary expression, and other innovations. Meanwhile the three kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark kept without noteworthy change the frontiers that had been established in the earlier period. Norway occupied the Atlantic side of the Scandinavian peninsula; Sweden the Baltic side, except that the southernmost tip, Scania (or Skaania), belonged to Denmark.

This was a position of great economic and political importance, for it contained the headquarters of the herring trade that the Hansa sought to monopolize, and it, together with the adjacent islands, gave the holder control of the straits. From time to time in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the more energetic kings of Denmark had asserted their sovereignty not only over Scania, but also over Holstein, the shores of Mecklenburg, and parts of Esthonia. As the Hansa took form, however, the Danish claims on the southern Baltic were lost to German princes and to the Teutonic Knights, Scania was taken by the Swedes, and Denmark itself was threatened with dissolution. Then, in 1340, the crown was inherited by the statesmanlike Waldemar IV, who at once set out to restore the monarchy. After twenty years of painstaking effort, he had so far succeeded that he found it possible to attempt the recovery of Scania. Defying the incompetent Magnus, king of both Sweden and Norway, he seized the coveted province and followed this triumph by sending an expedition to Gothland, where the town of Wisby was captured and sacked.

Waldemar  
IV of  
Denmark

Although Waldemar's act was ostensibly directed against the Swedes, Lübeck and its associates could not fail to perceive that he was reviving the old Danish ambition to dominate the Baltic. So the Hansa took the unprecedented step of going to war as the ally of Magnus. But Waldemar drove the confederate fleet out of the Sound and bought off his other enemies by arranging a marriage between his daughter Margaret and the son of Magnus.

War with  
the Hansa  
(1361-70)

Temporarily powerless, the Hansa signed humiliating peace, only, in the face of absolute ruin, to decide on more heroic measures. In 1367 a great congress at Cologne, said to represent no less than seventy-seven towns, voted to build up a new anti-Danish coalition and to prepare for immediate war. The result was that, in the following year, the Hanseatic forces took Copenhagen by surprise, occupied Scania, and forced Waldemar to accept terms of peace which were eventually made final at Stralsund in 1370. Thereby the league regained uncontested control of the sea, with free passage of the Sound and free trade throughout Danish territory. Its commissioners were to have charge of the herring market in Scania, where they were also to hold four royal castles until the cost of the war had been defrayed. Finally, no successor to the kingdom was to be installed without its consent.

The Hansa  
at its  
height

The Peace of Stralsund marked the height of Hanseatic power, which, however, remained principally commercial and naval, for the league soon dropped its pretension to interfere in royal elections. Waldemar died in 1375 and was succeeded by his daughter Margaret, who devoted her long reign of thirty-seven years to the project of a united Scandinavia. Outliving her husband and her son, she ultimately succeeded. At Calmar in 1397 the councils of the three kingdoms agreed to union under Margaret and her designated heir—an arrangement that was to have lasting consequences. Sweden, it is true, soon broke away from the combination, but Norway remained under what amounted to Danish subjection until the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, although the Hansa stubbornly defended its established liberties, its strength steadily declined. Inevitably the revived monarchies of Denmark, Poland, and Russia sought to break its economic tyranny on their coasts, and to the west the decay of Flanders was accompanied by the development of aggressive trade policies in Holland, France, Spain and England. The prosperity of the Hanseatic towns, like that of the Italian republics, had grown up when the Baltic and the Mediterranean were two isolated regions of maritime trade. As they came to be joined through the formation of new Atlantic routes, commercial ascendancy was shifted to ports along those routes. By the end of the fifteenth century the Hansa, like the order of Teutonic Knights, was an outworn institution, doomed to perish in the changing environment of the subsequent age.

## 3. THE GERMAN KINGDOM AND THE RISE OF THE HABSBURGS

After the Interregnum<sup>13</sup> the political history of Germany comes to be mainly that of its component states. Although the early fourteenth century witnessed several attempts at imperial revival, none of them had the slightest success, and thenceforth the monarchy was frankly taken for what it was worth. The kingship brought honor and distinction, but was valuable chiefly because it provided the means for dynastic advancement. In this respect Rudolf of Habsburg set a noteworthy example. Ignoring Italy, and even coronation as emperor, he devoted his reign to the establishment of his family in Austria and the adjoining fiefs. Rudolf, it will be remembered, had originally secured election through his relative obscurity. On his death in 1291 the electors, swayed by similar considerations, passed over his son Albert in favor of Adolf, count of Nassau. The latter, however, was given only a short time in which to develop an anti-Habsburg policy, for in 1298 he was slain in battle by Albert of Austria, who himself secured the crown and reigned for ten years. Then once more the electors asserted their independence and named another poor baron of the west. This was Henry, count of Luxembourg, a French-speaking country just across the Meuse from Champagne (see Table VIII).

The  
Habsburgs  
and their  
rivals

Henry VII's first thought, after obtaining general recognition, was to better his family fortunes, and the opportunity to do so now arose in Bohemia. That kingdom occupied an anomalous position. By origin it was entirely separate from Germany—a state built up by the Slavic people who call themselves Czechs.<sup>14</sup> Then, like Poland and Hungary, it had been brought within the sphere of German influence by the great emperors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. And while the Polish and Hungarian kings had subsequently regained their entire sovereignty, the king of Bohemia had remained an imperial vassal, holding the office of cupbearer at the German court and securing recognition as one of the seven electors.<sup>15</sup> Yet, in spite of this feudal relationship, and in spite of all economic and cultural penetration from the west, Bohemia was not part of Germany. Rather it

Bohemia  
and the  
house of  
Luxem-  
burg

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 540.

<sup>14</sup> See above, pp. 187, 324.

<sup>15</sup> See below, p. 592.



was a kingdom of the Czechs, ruled by a prince whom they elected, and who, until the opening of the fourteenth century, was also a Czech.

Ottokar, the king whom Rudolf had deprived of Austria and other fiefs, was succeeded by a remarkable son, Wenceslas II. Inspired by the desire for revenge against the Habsburgs, he not only secured election as king of Poland in 1300, but in the following year obtained the throne of Hungary for his son and namesake. Such aggrandizement on the part of an ancient enemy could not, of course, be tolerated by Albert of Austria, and to his joy the premature death of Wenceslas II was immediately followed by the murder of Wenceslas III in 1306. Since the old royal line by direct male succession had thus come to an end, Albert seized Bohemia as an escheated honor and gave it to one of his sons. The consequence of this high-handed action was a rebellion of the Czechs, in the course of which Albert was assassinated. So, when Henry VII came to the throne, he found conditions in Bohemia that naturally suggested intervention for his own benefit. Summarily disposing of a rival who had earlier been proclaimed by one of the local factions, he substituted his son, John, whom he married to a granddaughter of Ottokar. Having thus established the dynasty of Luxemburg at Prague, Henry wasted the remaining years of his reign in a vain excursion to Italy. Like so many of his predecessors, he there secured the imperial crown, quarreled with the papacy, became involved in a maze of wars, and fell a victim to malaria. Aside from an immortal tribute by the poet Dante, he had gained nothing.

Louis of  
Bavaria  
(1314-47)

Henry's death in 1313 was the signal for a civil war over the succession. The electors, it is true, agreed on rejecting the Luxemburg candidate, John of Bohemia, but their votes were divided between the heads of two other dynasties: Frederick of Habsburg, duke of Austria, and Louis of Wittelsbach, duke of Bavaria. Of these two it was Louis who gained the upper hand, for Frederick, having been taken prisoner, signed peace and ultimately died in 1330. Louis made use of his victory to engage in a violent dispute with the papacy—a war of words that was rendered memorable by his patronage of the great anti-clerical writers, William of Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua.<sup>16</sup> Other-

<sup>16</sup> See below, pp. 661 f.

wise, despite a Roman expedition, the contest was without result. As a matter of fact, the cause that lay nearest the king's heart was the material improvement of the Wittelsbach house. Following the example of his predecessors, Louis used the imperial authority to seize, for the benefit of his family, no less than three great inheritances: first, the margravate of Brandenburg; next, the county of Tyrol and the attached duchy of Carinthia; and finally, the county of Holland with its appendant territories. Temporarily the Habsburgs were in no position to protest so arrogant a display of royal greed, but the Luxemburg party was now spurred to action. John of Bohemia, preferring wars in France to the uncongenial society of Prague, was killed at Crécy in 1346.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, it was his son Charles who, in that same year, raised the standard of revolt, and who, on the opportune death of Louis in 1347, gained universal recognition as king.

Charles IV proved himself to be what Germany most needed—a moderate, sensible ruler, with a lively appreciation of realities. Having obtained the crown with the support of the pope, he faithfully carried out the agreement which he had signed in that connection. To the disgust of the Ghibelline factions, he steadfastly refused to wage any wars in their interest, merely paying a brief visit to Rome for the sake of his imperial coronation. By this action, more eloquent than speech, he proclaimed his renunciation of the Italian ambitions that had brought ruin and death to the reigning dynasties of his country for the past four hundred years. With the same clear vision, he took up the question of the German constitution. To make the kingdom into a unified state was beyond his power, or that of any reformer, no matter how patriotic. The fact might as well be faced, that Germany had disintegrated into a large number of political fragments and that, unless the process was checked, conditions would become infinitely worse. Although no conceivable measure could bring the princes into entire harmony, all would admit that a certain degree of union was desirable. Furthermore, as the head of an ambitious house pitted against formidable rivals, Charles felt a personal need of securing from the wreck of the empire all that could be profitably salvaged.

Charles IV  
(1347-78)

The result of the emperor's determination was a series of enactments adopted by two great diets and finally combined in an official decree known, from the seal which was attached to it,

<sup>17</sup> See below, p. 606.

The  
Golden  
Bull  
(1356)

as the Golden Bull. This famous document in large part confirmed and regulated the method of electing German kings which had already emerged in practice. Thus it recognized the sacred number of seven electors: the archbishops of Mainz, Cologne, and Trier, who acted respectively as the archchancellors of Germany, Italy, and Arles; together with the king of Bohemia, the count palatine of the Rhine, the duke of Saxony, and the margrave of Brandenburg, who held the offices respectively of chief cupbearer, grand seneschal, grand marshal, and grand chamberlain. Within one month after the death of a king the electors were to assemble at Frankfort-on-Main and there choose a successor by majority vote. And if at the end of thirty days they had failed to do so, they were to be put on a diet of bread and water until they had come to a decision. Other articles were inserted to prevent all appeals to force either before or after the election, with the intention of ending the civil wars over the succession that had been such a curse throughout the previous centuries.

Besides, the Golden Bull contained elaborate provisions to define and guarantee the regalian privileges held by each of the seven great princes. The territory of an electorate was declared an indivisible unit, passing, in the case of the four laymen, by the rule of primogeniture on the male side of the house only. If any of these four fiefs became vacant, it should be regranted by the emperor, saving to the Bohemians their established right of choosing their own kings. Thus Charles sought to perpetuate the monarchy by identifying it with the vested interests of a permanent electoral college. In this effort he succeeded, for although the kingship came to lack all estates, revenues, military forces, legislative powers, and judicial authority, it still persisted. And with the enforcement of the new official system, the pope lost all opportunity of reviewing or confirming the action of the electors. Indeed, by ignoring the papacy altogether, the Golden Bull encouraged future kings to follow the procedure ordered by a diet under Louis of Bavaria and assume the imperial title without coronation at Rome. The pope, of course, protested; but since the emperors no longer asserted any control over Italy, he had no real cause of complaint.

Bohemian  
affairs

While trying to solve the fundamental problems of the empire, Charles of necessity had also to consider the family fortunes. In this respect, too, his skillful diplomacy achieved a noteworthy

success. Taking advantage of every opportunity that arose, Charles was able to detach two major principalities from Wittelsbach control: Brandenburg he kept for his own house; Carinthia and the Tyrol he wisely awarded to the Habsburgs, thereby inducing them to forget Bohemia. That country John had left to be governed by the Czech nobles while he sought knightly adventure abroad. Charles, although he shared his father's admiration for French culture, wasted neither time nor money on romantic excursions in foreign lands. Instead, he devoted his best energies to the improvement of his Bohemian state, enlarging its frontiers by the incorporation of Silesia and guaranteeing its complete autonomy under its own laws. Charles, in fact, ruled Bohemia as a strictly constitutional monarch, for all his reforms, which touched every phase of the royal administration, were submitted to the national Estates. And to crown his work, he founded, after the models of Paris and Bologna, the great University of Prague.

Before he died in 1378, Charles was even able to obtain the advance election of his eldest son Wenceslas (Wenzel) to the German throne. Sigismund, his second son, was invested with Brandenburg and married to a daughter of Louis the Great, king of Hungary and Poland. This remarkable prince was an Angevin, being the great-great-grandson of the famous Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis.<sup>18</sup> His house, having virtually lost the kingdom of Sicily, secured that of Hungary, another fief of the papacy, when the old line of Magyar kings ended in 1301. And the new dynasty proved so successful on the Danube that, in 1370, the Poles chose Louis of Hungary to be their king also. Dying in 1382, he left his dominions to two daughters. By marrying one of them, Sigismund eventually acquired the Hungarian throne; the other heiress, accepted as queen by the Poles, was forced to marry the Lithuanian Jagiello.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, as we have seen, Poland was removed from its western entanglements and launched on a glorious career to the eastward.

Sigismund  
and the  
end of the  
Luxem-  
burg  
dynasty

On such relatively insignificant details of family history many other epoch-making events were to depend. Sigismund, after a rebellion against him had collapsed, secured possession of Hungary in 1387 and there reigned with notable success for fifty years. Wenceslas, however, soon proved himself an ignoble son, gaining fame principally as a drunkard. Before long a

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 550, and Table II.

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 584.

rebellion of the Germans prepared the way for the acquisition of the imperial throne by Sigismund, who, on his brother's death, became king of Bohemia also. How, in the meantime, he had been led to call the Council of Constance, and how the acts of that assembly gravely disturbed the peace of his realm, will be explained in a subsequent chapter. For the moment we are concerned only with the fate of the Luxemburg inheritance. Long before the emperor's death, Brandenburg had been given, as a reward for faithful service, to Frederick of Hohenzollern, the first of the princely line that reigned at Berlin till 1918. There remained, then, three important territories for Sigismund to bequeath to his heirs. The county of Luxemburg, through the marriage of a niece, eventually came into the possession of the Burgundian dukes.<sup>20</sup> But Hungary and Bohemia both passed to the husband of Sigismund's only daughter, Albert of Austria, elected as Albert II of Germany in 1438 (see Table VIII). Thus, as if by accident, the house of Habsburg attained the dominant position in central Europe which it was to hold, almost without interruption, for over three hundred years.



The origin  
of the  
Swiss con-  
federation

Closely associated with the fortunes of this illustrious family were those of the people whom we know as the Swiss. Originally the name Schwyz was borne only by a small district adjoining Lake Lucerne on the east. On the other side was a similar district called Unterwalden, and to the south lay that of Uri. These were the three Forest Cantons, the men of which in 1291 swore a solemn oath to resist all aggression and to provide for the administration of justice by the natives of the locality. To explain the origin of their confederation, we do not have to imagine the persistence in isolated valleys of a primitive liberty. As a matter of fact, the Swiss mountaineers were not isolated, for their homes were situated on the great highroad connecting the St. Gothard pass with the Rhine. From the Italian side they had long heard tales of victorious communes. To the northward Freiburg-im-Breisgau<sup>21</sup> had been founded over a century and a half earlier, and since then its institutions had been extended to Bern, Fribourg, and other nearby towns. By that time, indeed, emancipation had become general among the peasantry of all advanced regions, and many rural communities, either through

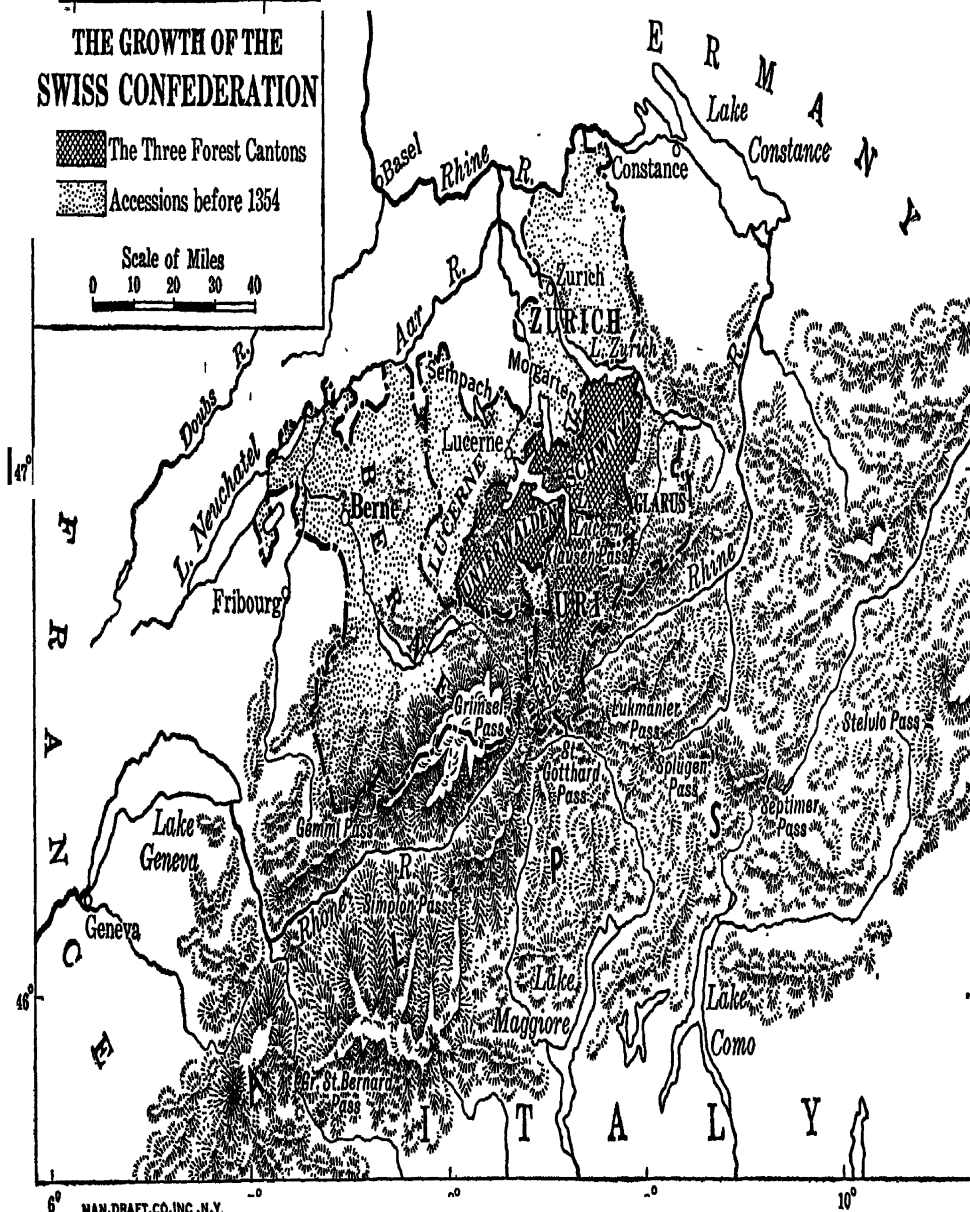
<sup>20</sup> See below, p. 636.

<sup>21</sup> See above, p. 355.

# THE GROWTH OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION

-  The Three Forest Cantons
-  Accessions before 1354

Scale of Miles  
0 10 20 30 40



seignorial grant or through forcible usurpation, had acquired rights of self-government.

In Germany, especially, the increasing disorder that accompanied the Interregnum encouraged the growth on all sides of defensive leagues among the townsmen and the lesser nobility. The Hansa was only the most successful of various associations which then took form. An extensive confederation of Rhine cities grew up during the later thirteenth century, and subsequently a similar union acquired great power in Suabia. The action of the Forest Cantons was therefore not unprecedented; only the amazing results that ensued made it an event of extraordinary significance. The mountaineers were inspired to take their famous oath in 1291, not because their condition had become worse, but because it had improved. For many years they had objected to the authority exercised throughout their territories by the house of Habsburg and had appealed to various imperial grants as justifying their tenure of special privilege. Recently, with the election of Rudolf, they had come to stand directly under the monarchy; now that the king was dead, they sought to maintain that position—like the free cities, to hold their liberties immediately of the empire. Such a claim was naturally resisted by their Habsburg lords; when Henry VII acquired the throne, however, he was quite willing to gain useful allies by granting what the three cantons desired.

Morgarten  
(1315) and  
Sempach  
(1386)

Thus emboldened, the confederates actively supported Louis of Bavaria in his war with Frederick of Austria and went so far as to take the offensive against their own local enemies. The result was that in 1315 the Habsburg prince, vowing to chastise his rebellious peasants, brought up a formidable army of horse and foot. But while advancing through the pass at Morgarten, it was charged from the flank by a force of Swiss pikemen and driven back with heavy loss. Frederick himself barely escaped with his life. In celebration of their victory, the mountaineers at once renewed and strengthened their pact of 1291. And within the next fifty years they, in one way or another, brought into their alliance the Habsburg towns of Lucerne and Zürich, the free city of Bern, and the cantons of Zug and Glarus. The Habsburg lands, meanwhile, were divided between two branches of the family (see Table VIII). The territories in south Germany fell to Leopold of Styria, the head of the younger branch, and when

he tried to enforce his rights, he encountered the hostility of the Swiss at every turn. Consequently he decided on the reconquest of their country. It was a fatal step, for in 1386 his invading army was crushed and he himself was slain at Sempach.

This second victory ended for all time the Habsburg pretensions to rule the Swiss. Henceforth the confederacy was assured of virtual independence by its immediate tenure of imperial liberties. Yet it still remained a loose union devoid of any real central government. Each associate acted as an autonomous state, administering its own local affairs according to its own established custom and acting in concert with the rest only under pressure of common danger. Now that the Habsburg enemy was disposed of, the league was soon paralyzed by internal rivalries—disputes between the urban centers and the rural districts, between democratic and aristocratic factions, and between the fully privileged members and their dependent communities. Happily for the cause of Swiss nationalism, these explosive tendencies were eventually overcome, and by the second half of the fifteenth century the league was again rapidly extending its authority over surrounding regions. This was the situation when it became involved in bitter conflict with the powerful dukes of Burgundy, whose relations with France and Austria will receive detailed treatment below.

The Swiss  
in the  
fifteenth  
century

#### 4. THE BALKAN STATES AND THE OTTOMAN TURKS

By the thirteenth century the Balkan peninsula was already the scene of perpetual strife among a dozen conflicting peoples. In 1261, when Michael Palæologus, the ruler of Nicæa, took Constantinople from the Latins, his restoration of the Byzantine Empire was only nominal.<sup>22</sup> The control of the Ægean, with its islands and the coasts of the Peloponnesus, was kept by Venice; the duchy of Athens and the principality of Achaia remained in the hands of their French conquerors; and the emperor's possession of his other European provinces was disputed by the revived kingdoms of Serbia and Bulgaria.<sup>23</sup> The latter had again become a great power under tsars who dreamed of seizing Constantinople and imposing their authority over the entire Greek world. But these ambitions never came near fulfillment. The

Bulgaria,  
Serbia,  
and their  
neighbors

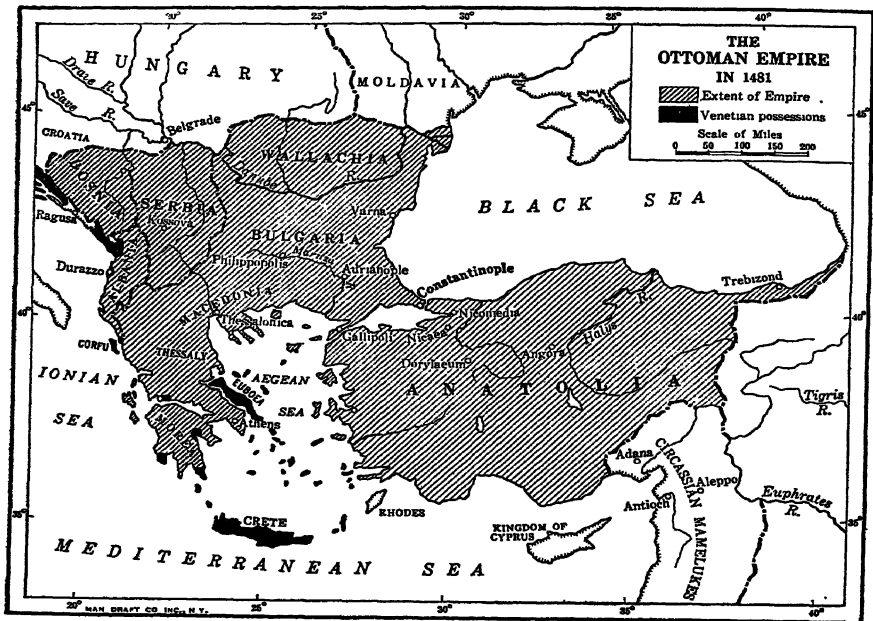
<sup>22</sup> See above, p. 529.

<sup>23</sup> See above, p. 526.



Bulgars were unable to reach the Ægean by completing the conquest of the Maritza Valley. Beyond the Danube they were held back by the Tartars; and when the Golden Horde weakened, it was the Rumanians who preempted the territory and there set up the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. To the west, meanwhile, stubborn resistance to Bulgarian encroachment was offered by the Serbs.

This people, the nucleus of the modern Jugo-Slav nation, had another inveterate enemy in the Hungarian kingdom, which held



the bank of the Danube across from Belgrade and also, through the acquisition of Croatia, a strong position on the Adriatic. In addition, Hungary was seeking to extend its control over the princes of Bosnia—a project warmly supported by the pope, whose authority had again been renounced by the Greek and Slavic churches of the Balkans. On the other hand, Serbia, in helping the Bosnians and in otherwise opposing the Hungarians, could always count on an alliance with Venice, which wanted no powerful rival on the Dalmatian coast. Accordingly, as Bulgaria and Hungary both declined toward the end of the thir-

teenth century, the Serbs were advantageously placed for the launching of a major offensive, and in Stephen Dushan (1331-55) they found a king of outstanding genius. Equally successful in war and diplomacy, he rapidly pushed his dominion over the whole of Epirus, Thessaly, and Macedonia, leaving to the emperor nothing but a fragment of Thrace. For a time it seemed as if Dushan, who had now assumed the title of tsar, might even take Constantinople. That project, however, proved to be beyond his resources, and after his death the Serbian Empire rapidly fell to pieces. Two centuries of political turmoil had served merely to prepare the peninsula for Turkish occupation.

One result of the great Mongol drive under the successors of Jenghis Khan had been to destroy the Seljuk sultanate in Asia Minor. This, however, did not mean that an end had been made of Turkish domination. On the contrary, the region now came to include more Turks than ever, for the collapse of the old political barriers brought to the western lands another wave of nomadic immigration such as that of the eleventh century.<sup>24</sup> And quite naturally the more vigorous elements of the invading population tended to be drawn to the frontiers of Christendom, where opportunities for booty and conquest were most promising. Among the various Turkish tribes which thus appeared along the imperial border in Anatolia one in particular was to found a state of tremendous importance for both the Christian and the Mohammedan worlds. Of its early history virtually nothing is known; but by the second half of the thirteenth century it had somehow established itself in the region about Dorylæum, where the first army of crusaders had won a famous victory. From that strategic position it carried on systematic raiding into the adjacent Byzantine territory and finally, under Osman (1299-1326), it secured the permanent conquest of Brusa. Thus emerged the remarkable dynasty of the Osmanli or Ottomans, who were eventually to give their name to the strongest of all Moslem empires.

The  
emergence  
of the  
Ottoman  
Turks

Osman's son, Orkhan, was equally victorious. By the capture of Nicæa and Nicomedia his Turks came to dominate the southern shore of the Propontus, and before long the utter feebleness of the Byzantine state resulted in the loss of its entire Asiatic province. Orkhan now assumed the title of sultan and, as be-

Orkhan  
(1326-59)

<sup>24</sup> See above, p. 327.

fitted his enhanced dignity, proceeded to convert what had been a mere tribal union into a territorial monarchy. Through lack of contemporary sources, the details of his administration remain doubtful, but the excellence of his work is amply attested by its results. To him in particular would seem to be due the organization of the perfectly disciplined Ottoman army, with its famous corps of Janissaries, entirely recruited from the subject Christian population. Meanwhile the Turks had long been introduced to Europe through employment as mercenaries in the Greek wars; and finding conditions favorable, they were not slow to launch projects of their own in that direction. So, in 1356, the sultan was led to send a raiding expedition across the strait at Gallipoli. Others followed, and their easy progress determined Murad, Orkhan's successor, to undertake the systematic conquest of the peninsula.

Murad I  
(1359-89)

Taking Adrianople in 1361, Murad made it his capital and thence directed a series of offensives which the Christians, suffering from chronic disunion, were totally unable to check. First one and then another of the Slavic principalities was either destroyed or turned into an Ottoman dependency. The subjection of the Bulgarians brought the sultan's power to the Danube and the Black Sea. The overwhelming defeat of the southern Serbs on the Maritza in 1371 resulted in his conquest of all Macedonia. Then, at last, the Christians of the northern Balkans renounced their local jealousies for the sake of common resistance to the Moslem, but in 1389 their cause met irretrievable disaster on the field of Kossovo. Henceforth the northern Serbian kingdom, reduced to narrow limits, existed only as a vassal state of the Turks. In the meantime the emperor at Constantinople, to assure his victory over a Greek rival, had also acknowledged the sultan's overlordship and promised to pay him annual tribute. Thus the Byzantine Empire, contained within the walls of the capital city, entered upon the period of its final agony. Wholly isolated by the Turkish conquests on land and by the unceasing conflict of the Venetians and Genoese on the sea, Constantinople was clearly doomed. Yet, owing to a series of unforeseen events, the fatal day was long postponed.

The assassination of Murad by a Serbian patriot at Kossovo brought to the throne Bayazid I, who was soon faced by a crusading army under the command of Sigismund, the Hungarian

king.<sup>25</sup> Crushing the invaders at Nicopolis in 1396, Bayazid reasserted his dominance in the Balkans, obliterated the remnants of the Bulgarian kingdom, subjected Wallachia to his authority, and forced Bosnia to accept Hungarian sovereignty as its only means of escaping a similar fate. Then the sultan diverted his principal attention to subjugating the Turkish emirs of Asia Minor. While he was thus engaged, the Byzantine government, encouraged by Sigismund's crusade, turned against him and sought a Latin alliance. Thereupon Bayazid ordered the surrender of Constantinople on pain of its total destruction. And very likely he would have carried out his threat if at that juncture he had not been compelled to meet a more formidable enemy. This was Timur, also a Turk and a Mohammedan, but a conqueror who resembled the Mongol despoilers of the thirteenth century rather than the more statesmanlike Ottoman sultans. Rising to power in Turkestan, Timur, in the years following 1380, built up a vast tributary empire that reached from the frontiers of India to those of Syria. By 1402 nomadic hordes were again menacing Anatolia, and when Bayazid advanced to drive them out, his army was routed at Angora and he himself was taken prisoner.

Bayazid I  
(1389-  
1402) vs.  
Timur  
(d. 1405)

Momentarily it seemed as if the Ottoman power, which was now further weakened by a war over the succession, would inevitably succumb, and on all sides the Christians, rather naïvely, burst into hymns of thanksgiving. Timur, however, chose not to follow up his western victory, and died in 1405 while preparing for an expedition to China. Then, as his empire disintegrated, the Ottomans, with amazing vigor, restored their state and advanced to a fresh series of triumphs. This recovery, begun under Mohammed I, was completed under his son, Murad II, who found many thousands of useful recruits in the fragments of Timur's invading horde. Thanks to these resources and to the efficiency of the administrative system which he had inherited, Murad was able not only to extend his dominion throughout most of Asia Minor, but also to repel a new western crusade in the Balkans. It, like its predecessors, was commanded by the Hungarians.

The  
Ottoman  
recovery

Albert II, the Habsburg heir of Sigismund,<sup>26</sup> died after a reign of less than two years and was theoretically succeeded in Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary by his cousin Frederick. Actually,

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 593.

<sup>26</sup> See above, p. 594.

The  
defeat of  
Hungary

the latter had little power in any of his kingdoms, being opposed by strong national parties among the Czechs and the Magyars. Under these circumstances, Polish influence quickly reasserted itself in both countries; and although Bohemia proved loyal to the Habsburg dynasty, in 1440 the Hungarian crown was formally bestowed on Ladislas III, son of the illustrious Jagiello. The chief mover in this affair was John Hunyadi, governor of a southern Hungarian province, and he was now given command of the Turkish war, which was being actively supported by the papacy. In the years 1441-43 Hunyadi made himself a great crusading hero by liberating Serbia, restoring Hungarian sovereignty in Wallachia, and driving the Ottoman forces out of Bulgaria. In 1444 the sultan even agreed to sign a humiliating peace, but no sooner had Ladislas sworn to the treaty than he was persuaded by a papal legate to disregard its terms. The result was that, instead of expelling the Turks from Europe, the Christians were overwhelmed in the decisive battle of Varna. Ladislas, in the eyes of all Moslems, suffered for his bad faith by being numbered among the slain.

The fall of  
Constantinople  
(1453)

In the ensuing campaigns the Turks quickly regained all that they had lost. Before Murad's death in 1451 they were engaged in reducing Bosnia and in extending their raids into southern Greece, where no one of a dozen local princes could effectively withstand them. Then Constantinople's long reprieve was brought to an end by the new sultan, Mohammed II. In 1453, after a terrific siege of nearly eight weeks' duration, the great city fell to the nation which has since held it. The capture was of obvious importance to the Ottomans, who thereby completed their conquest of the Byzantine Empire. Otherwise it can hardly be said to have had great significance in the history of Europe. The Turks had already been the masters of the Balkans for the better part of a hundred years. By taking Constantinople they destroyed little that had not been moribund for much longer than that. And as will be seen in a later chapter, the time-honored assertion that the fall of the capital introduced a new epoch in western culture has nothing to recommend it. However the Modern Age may be defined, it did not begin in 1453.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

#### I. THE OPENING OF THE WAR

IN 1316, for the first time in three centuries, a French king died with no son to take his place. Two years earlier Louis X had succeeded his father Philip IV, but was now dead, leaving only an infant daughter, Jeanne. A great council, summoned to consider the problem, decided that France should have no queen regnant and that, consequently, the crown should be worn by Louis's brother Philip. And when the same situation recurred in 1322, Philip's brother was crowned as Charles IV. Six years later, however, another question had to be settled: Could a woman, though incapable of occupying the throne herself, give a valid title to her son? If so, Edward III of England was the lawful king of France, being, through his mother Isabelle, the grandson of Philip IV (see Table VII). Since this solution was highly undesirable in French eyes, the further rule was now laid down, that the throne could be inherited only through males—by virtue of which the count of Valois, son of Philip IV's brother, was recognized as Philip VI. The famous principle of succession, as thus defined, really had nothing to do with the Salic Law; that tag was subsequently attached to it by lawyers who falsely invoked ancient custom to justify an action already taken.

The Valois  
succession  
in France  
(1328)

Temporarily, at least, the new settlement encountered no serious opposition. Jeanne, daughter of Louis X, was in a way compensated for the loss of the French crown by installation as queen of Navarre.<sup>1</sup> The youthful Edward of England, after some little hesitation, performed the accustomed homage for his French fiefs. So Philip VI was left in a position of commanding influence. As king of France, he was master of virtually the entire country, with the exception of four outlying principalities: Guienne, Brittany, Flanders, and Burgundy. These were important lands, but no one of them appeared strong enough to resist for long the encroachment of the royal authority. And outside his realm the king's prestige had never been so great.

Philip VI  
(1328-50)

<sup>1</sup> Philip IV had secured Navarre by marriage to the heiress of Champagne; see above, p. 565.

The pope was now a Frenchman, residing at Avignon, where he was actually, if not legally, under Capetian protection.<sup>2</sup> The house of Anjou, still enjoying the special favor of the papacy, ruled over Provence, Naples, and Hungary. That of Luxemburg, which was closely attached to the French court, had recently held the German throne and was now established in Bohemia.<sup>3</sup> The whole strip of imperial borderlands lying to the west of the Alps and the Rhine was under the cultural domination of France, as were also northern Spain and the British Isles.

Philip of Valois, however, was not the man to make good use of any opportunity, no matter how favorable. Incurably frivolous, he cared for nothing but display and entertainment, making his reign a constant series of tournaments and other chivalrous festivals. His sole concern with the royal government was to secure funds whereby to satisfy his extravagant tastes. So, without adequate supervision, the kingdom was turned over to the management, often cruel and rapacious, of the official bureaucracy. Yet such maladministration could be readily pardoned as long as the country in general remained prosperous and at peace—as had been the case for a century or so. It was only when war brought an enormous increase of taxes, together with defeat, invasion, and widespread misery, that the monarchy fell into disrepute. That he recklessly incurred this series of calamities is sufficient cause for listing Philip VI among the worst of French kings. His reign, in fact, was fortunate in but one respect: he was able to purchase the rights of the childless count of Vienne, popularly known, because of the dolphin in his coat of arms, as the Dauphin. Dauphiné was the first of the great imperial fiefs to be secured by the Capetians, and thenceforth the title of its ruler was borne by the king's eldest son.

Edward  
III  
(1327-77)

Meanwhile in England Edward I had been succeeded by the incompetent Edward II, whose reign of twenty years was chiefly notable for the decisive victory of the Scots at Bannockburn.<sup>4</sup> Shortly afterwards the king became embroiled in civil war with his barons, and in 1327 he was finally deposed and replaced by his young son, Edward III. The latter, taking personal charge of the government in 1330, soon revealed himself a king superficially like Philip VI—showy, sport-loving, dissolute, and lazy.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 657 f.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 590.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 565.

Nevertheless, the English king had considerable native ability. A better diplomat than Philip, Edward was infinitely his superior as a general. This fact was demonstrated by the brilliant opening of what was to prove a very long and dreary war in France. Continuing intermittently until the second half of the fifteenth century, it became known as the Hundred Years' War. Actually it was merely the revival, with certain new features, of the ancient struggle between the kings of France and their vassals, the kings of England.<sup>5</sup>

Guienne remained, as before, the source of chronic disputes over boundaries and the respective rights of the duke and his lord. In Scotland the English sought to overturn Bruce, who, of course, continued his alliance with the French. But the primary cause of trouble was Flanders, where the count was again faced by a rebellion of his cities. No sooner had Philip VI secured his crown, than he led an army northward. Having defeated the communal forces, Philip established in Flanders what amounted to a royal administration, for the count had little authority except through the king's support. Such an arrangement was naturally distasteful to Edward, who proceeded by lavish expenditure to build up an anti-French coalition throughout the Low Countries and the Rhinelands. Then in 1336 he directed a mortal blow at Flemish industry by laying an embargo on the export of wool. The immediate result was that the weavers of Ghent forgot their feud with the cloth merchants and set up one of the latter, Jacob van Artevelde, as dictator of the city. And as the insurrection spread to the other centers of population, Artevelde soon became virtual ruler of the county. A commercial peace between England and Flanders was followed by a political alliance, according to which the Flemings recognized Edward III as their lawful sovereign.

Edward's  
intervention  
in  
Flanders

Thus the English king momentarily secured from his rival a valuable territory, together with a fleet which would enable him to control the sea. It was in this same connection that he revived his claim to the French throne and quartered his arms with the lilies of France. In 1328 the title which he asserted had been worth at least an argument. Ten years later it was valueless, for in the meantime Jeanne of Navarre had been married to the count of Evreux and had given birth to a son, later known as

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 374 f., 386 f., 410 f., 549 f., 566 f.



Charles the Bad (see Table VII). If succession could validly be held through a woman, it was he who should wear the French crown. Edward's action was merely a political gesture in connection with a war which had already begun. On his side, Philip retaliated by declaring Guienne forfeit and sending a fleet to hold the Channel. But in 1340 it was destroyed at Sluys by the ships of Edward and his Flemish allies, and thenceforth the English were free to invade France whenever they pleased. Half a dozen years then passed without any very significant events. The most that Edward could do was to raid the exposed countryside with a few thousand troops. In Brittany, where a civil war over the succession had recently broken out, he failed to establish his candidate. And in 1345 he lost control of Flanders when Artevelde was deposed and slain in the course of a popular insurrection at Ghent.

The battle  
of Crécy  
(1346)

With the intention of improving his position in the north, Edward in the following year landed in Normandy with an army of about 10,000 men.<sup>6</sup> Taking Caen, he crossed the Seine and advanced through the defenseless province, plundering and burning. There he was caught by Philip, who, after long delay, finally arrived with about twice the English force. Just in time Edward discovered a ford across the Somme and so was enabled to prepare an advantageous position at Crécy. Adopting the tactics perfected by his grandfather, Edward dismounted his cavalry and placed them, grouped in three battalions, on the crest of a hill protected by hedges. On the flank of each battalion he stationed his archers, equipped with the English long bows, and along the front the ground was dotted with pits and sharpened stakes. On the French side nothing was done to counteract these preparations. Philip's knights charged bravely time and again, but in the face of the deadly storm of arrows could never reach the enemy position. And when at last the English men-at-arms swept down the hill, they carried all before them. Some 1500 nobles were killed, including the king's brother, the count of Flanders, and John, the famous king-errant of Bohemia.

The immediate result was Edward's capture of Calais, which, recolonized by his own men, he turned into a useful base for

<sup>6</sup> Many books, in dealing with the battles of the Hundred Years' War, continue to repeat the figures given by contemporary chroniclers. They are always gross exaggerations. The exact size of the English armies during this period is known from the official records of the royal government.

further operations and a commercial center to rival the Flemish towns. Otherwise the war reverted to its previous course of pillaging expeditions and local skirmishes. The command of the English forces soon passed to the king's eldest son, Edward, called the Black Prince, while Philip VI, in 1350, was succeeded by his son John. The latter, unhappily for his country, was another gallant gentleman, devoid of all ability either as a statesman or as a general. After wasting five years in chivalrous gatherings and futile negotiations, John finally assembled an army with which to drive the Black Prince out of Languedoc. The English force of 6500, outnumbered more than two to one, was forced to fight near Poitiers and the result was another battle of Crécy. John, thinking that he had mastered the enemy's tactics, dismounted his knights and sent them in full armor on a series of frontal charges, uphill and over ground soaked by the rain! The ensuing slaughter was terrific. Some 2000 French knights fell on the field and an equal number were taken prisoner, including the king himself and his youngest son, Philip.

King  
John's  
defeat at  
Poitiers  
(1356)

This catastrophe brought France untold distress. While John passed a pleasant captivity in England, continuing his round of pleasures in chivalrous company, the royal authority virtually disappeared throughout his kingdom. Pending negotiations for the ransom of the king, hostilities were suspended by a series of truces, but to the country at large they proved as destructive as war. By this time both combatants had come to rely on bands of soldiers recruited, equipped, and paid by professional captains. These free companies, as they were called, contained men from all over Europe, who served no cause except their own, hiring themselves out to the most generous employer and changing sides as best suited their interests. Now that their principals were at peace, such troops were thrown out of employment, and since there was no force to prevent them, they naturally turned to banditry. Capturing a fortified town or castle, they would make it headquarters for widespread devastation. When one region was laid waste, they would move into another. Before long there was hardly a province in France that had not suffered from their depredations or paid blackmail to escape them.

The free  
companies

Meanwhile, too, the country had been visited by the great pestilence known as the Black Death. This, it is now generally agreed, was an epidemic of bubonic plague—one of many which in past ages have swept Europe with appalling loss of life. Today plague

The Black  
Death

is recognized as a germ disease frequently carried by the fleas that infest small animals, especially rats. It is very significant that the course of the Black Death can be traced primarily along the routes visited by ships and, of course, by their rats. According to contemporary accounts, the pestilence came into Europe from the orient, being brought from the Crimea to Italy in 1347. Thence, in the course of the next two years, it spread into Germany, France, Spain, and England; and eventually it ravaged every part of the continent, as well as the Mediterranean shores of Asia and Africa. Parts of western Europe were still suffering from it as late as the battle of Poitiers.

In the absence of reliable statistics, all estimates of mortality during these years are largely guesswork. Throughout the crowded quarters of the towns, where sanitation was worst, often more than half of the inhabitants died, and some villages were practically wiped out. But within a whole country, such as France or England, no more than a third of the total population could have been killed—that would be quite sufficient to constitute a major calamity. The effect on agrarian conditions has been much disputed, and something more will be said on this subject in a later chapter. In the present connection the epidemic is mentioned chiefly because, by immeasurably adding to the misery of the French people, it helped to produce the great political crisis of 1357-58.

## 2. CHARLES V AND THE RISE OF BURGUNDY

The  
dauphin  
and his  
enemies

When John went into captivity, he named as his lieutenant in France the dauphin Charles. The latter, a youth of eighteen, now found himself placed in a truly desperate situation. With the monarchy wholly discredited, he was surrounded by ambitious enemies against whom he could hope to accomplish very little. First of all, there were the English, who had extended their occupation toward Paris and who naturally considered themselves the masters of the kingdom. Secondly, there was Charles the Bad of Navarre, who had already earned his nickname by his intrigues against the Valois house. Having been treacherously seized and imprisoned by King John, Charles, as soon as he was again at liberty, posed as a victim of royal tyranny. A clever and unprincipled politician, he sought, by ingratiating himself with the people and allying with the dauphin's foes, to advance his claim to the throne as the grandson of Louis X. In the third

place, there was Étienne Marcel, the Parisian *prévôt des marchands*, i.e., chief of the local gild merchant. Since Paris had never been allowed a communal organization, the citizens found in Marcel a sort of unofficial mayor. A wealthy cloth merchant like Artevelde, he was apparently inspired by the Flemish example. At any rate, he now made himself dictator of the French capital.

Marcel's cause was aided by the fact that in 1357 the Estates were again meeting in Paris. Since the time of Philip IV,<sup>7</sup> the kings had come more and more to rely on subsidies granted by large assemblies of clergy, nobility, and bourgeois, called either for a single province or for a group of them. Under pressure of the war, this practice had recently tended to be recognized as a constitutional principle; yet no definite law had ever been formulated on the subject. Usually, when the king needed money or troops, he had come to hold his Estates in two divisions, one for the north and one for the south; and these bodies, through their control of the revenue, had become increasingly outspoken in their demands for reform. So in 1356 the Estates of Languedoc met at Toulouse and those of the north at Paris. The former agreed to an aid, but it was to be levied by southerners and spent solely for the defense of their own country. Charles, being powerless to object, gave his consent and turned to the much more difficult problem of handling the Estates at Paris.

The  
Estates of  
1356

This assembly, meeting in one body, quickly came under the influence of Étienne Marcel, who had the backing of the Parisian populace. No taxes, said the Estates, would be granted until the royal government had been thoroughly purified and reconstituted at their dictation. Charles was able merely to postpone the session for a year; then in desperation he agreed to the *Grande Ordonnance*, which, if it had been permanently enforced, would have established a strictly limited monarchy. According to its provisions, the royal council was to be filled with ministers nominated by the Estates. The latter should meet regularly, whether called by the king or not; and when they were not in session, they were to be represented by a standing committee. No tax could be levied, no military force could be raised, no truce could be signed, except by authorization of the Estates. They were to appoint deputies (*élus*) to collect all subsidies that might be granted, and generals (*généraux*) to receive the money, pay the

The  
Grande  
Ordon-  
nance  
(1357)

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 569.

troops, and submit accounts for audit. Other articles set up agencies to look after the relief of the poor and in other ways to alleviate the general distress.

Marcel  
and the  
Jacquerie  
(1358)

From England the king at once declared null and void all acts of the Estates; but the latter defied his authority and eventually that of the dauphin also, when he sought to evade his commitments. Early in 1358 the growing antagonism between Charles and Marcel led to an open breach. Leaving Paris, the dauphin appealed to the provinces for aid and collected an army with which to lay siege to his rebellious capital. On his side, Marcel formed a close alliance with the king of Navarre and organized a communal militia with which he dominated the city and undertook offensive campaigns in the neighborhood. This was the signal for the outbreak of the famous Jacquerie. The peasants, popularly known as Jacques, had from the first been the chief sufferers from the ravages of war and the unrestrained brigandage that followed the collapse of the royal government. Recently the countryside of the Île de France had been the scene of constant turmoil in which the troops of the dauphin, of Navarre, and of the English had vied with the free companies in making the life of the people intolerable. The last straw was the appearance of bailiffs to collect the ransoms of various nobles captured at Poitiers. The peasants, already accustomed to organizing for the sake of local defense, followed the example of Paris by defying all superior authority and rising against the discredited aristocracy.

Actually, the insurrection did not prove to be very formidable. It hardly extended beyond the valley of the Oise and there—despite the horrid tales of the chroniclers—resulted in little more than the pillaging of a few châteaux. But temporarily the threat of a general peasant war induced all factions of the nobility to make common cause against the rebels. Before a month had passed, an army commanded by Charles of Navarre had cut to pieces the main force of the Jacques and mercilessly crushed all resistance in their villages. Meanwhile Marcel had been imprudently led to form a sort of alliance with the insurgents and so to stimulate a sharp reaction against his régime in Paris. It was said that he was planning to deliver the capital to the English; if he had any such intention, it was set at naught by a royalist uprising in which the dictator lost his life. By the end of the summer the dauphin had reentered Paris in triumph and was engaged in the work of political reconstruction.

In 1359 John was foolish enough to sign a treaty by which Edward III, besides securing a huge ransom, was to have in full sovereignty all the old Angevin territory plus Brittany. This mad settlement was at once rejected by the dauphin and by a fresh meeting of the Estates which he summoned for that purpose. And when Edward invaded France to enforce his rights, Charles adopted the tactics of stripping the country before the English advance and retiring behind strong fortifications. Thus the invading army spent itself in fruitless campaigns, and in 1360 Edward agreed to the Peace of Calais. Thereby he was to secure little besides the ancient duchy of Aquitaine, which he was to have as an independent possession only when, on the receipt of John's entire ransom, he renounced his title to the French throne. Meanwhile the royal captive regained his liberty on payment of a first installment. Unfortunately for the English, John celebrated his homecoming by resuming his old spendthrift habits. As soon as money was collected for his ransom, it was squandered in other ways. So, being unable to keep his plighted word, the chivalrous king went back to captivity in England, where he died in 1364.

The Peace  
of Calais  
(1360)

At last Charles could wear the crown of which he had so long exercised the powers; and no prince ever deserved the honor more than he. At the age of twenty-six he already merited the name by which he was to become known—Charles the Wise. In physique he was not impressive, having neither a handsome face nor a well-proportioned body. He was not a chivalrous warrior—for which his subjects should have been very grateful—but a statesman, patient, cautious, and hard-working. By these qualities, in combination with his virtue, piety, and general refinement, Charles V set a new standard for the French kingship. Under him it became apparent to even the humblest peasant that the well-being of the country depended on the monarchy, rather than the Estates. And with the support that now rallied to his cause, Charles achieved a brilliant success in all departments of his activity.

The character  
of  
Charles V  
(1364-80)

One outstanding feature of the king's statesmanship was his ability to pick talented assistants. Among them the most famous was his constable, Bertrand Du Guesclin, who had begun life as a poor Breton noble. Chiefly remarkable at first for his extreme ugliness, Du Guesclin won a European reputation by his exploits in the local wars. Shortly after the battle of Poitiers he entered the service of the dauphin, who quickly recognized his military genius and eventually placed him in charge of a campaign

Du Guesclin, constable of France

against Charles of Navarre. By a victory won just at the time of Charles V's coronation, Du Guesclin forced that troublesome prince to sue for peace and so removed him as an important factor from French politics. There remained only the free companies to be got rid of, and with that end in view Du Guesclin was commissioned by the king to lead them to Spain, where a civil war had broken out over the throne of Castile. This affair, which also served to divert the attention of the Black Prince, ruler of Guienne, dragged on for half a dozen years. Then, in 1370, Du Guesclin was recalled to be constable of France—an honor which hitherto had been reserved for members of great houses.

The  
military  
reforms of  
Charles V

Such prejudice Charles brushed aside. Being now ready to renew the English war, he needed a good commander, and in Du Guesclin he had one after his own heart. Although the constable had become a legendary hero by feats of knightly prowess, his military genius lay rather in a sound generalship, quite indifferent to chivalrous traditions. The Peace of Calais had proved hard to enforce. While scrupulously observing its letter, Charles took advantage of its many complicated provisions to impose delay after delay. He had, in fact, no intention of allowing the treaty to stand a moment longer than was necessary; the object of his diplomacy was merely to gain time for military preparations. Everywhere throughout the kingdom fortifications were improved and extended. Paris was encircled by a new wall. In return for subsidies, seignorial castles were brought under royal control. The army was thoroughly reformed, being now organized in permanent companies of cavalry, infantry, and artillery<sup>8</sup>—all paid by the king and subject to his discipline. A regular navy was constituted, to cooperate, whenever that was possible, with the forces on land.

Successful  
war  
against the  
English

As soon as conditions seemed favorable, a pretext for war was not hard to find. First of all, the king's lordship over Guienne was reasserted on the ground that the stipulations in the Peace of Calais had never been fulfilled; then the Black Prince was ordered to defend various actions before the *parlement* of Paris, and when he refused, hostilities began. This time the French army risked no such battles as Crécy and Poitiers. Adopting the tactics already used by Charles in 1359, Du Guesclin fought a purely defensive war. The natural odds had always been against

<sup>8</sup> See below, p. 629.

the English—a relatively small force operating in a foreign country, where the population was either unreliable or frankly hostile. Edward III was now in his dotage, maintaining with difficulty an administration that had lost all credit with his subjects. The Black Prince, incapacitated by disease, had to abandon to subordinates all command in the field. Under these circumstances, the war soon became a triumphal procession for the French. By 1380, when Charles V and his great constable both died, the English remained in possession of only three small territories on the coast: one about Bordeaux, one about Bayonne, and one in the north about Calais.

While engaged in reversing the military situation in France, Charles V was also able to reorganize the government in a way entirely favorable to his own interests. In order to pay the ransom still owing for John's release, the Estates of the north had granted the king a considerable revenue for an indefinite period. This included excise taxes on salt, wines, liquors, and other merchandise, together with a direct tax on certain kinds of property. Subsequently, when the Estates objected to new imposts which Charles sought to levy, he agreed to drop them on condition that the old ones should be made permanent. And with the taxes the king took over the machinery which had earlier been set up by the Estates for collecting them. Henceforth the *élus* and *généraux* were royal officials, and representative assemblies ceased to be called, except for particular regions, such as Normandy and Languedoc, which had somehow obtained recognition of their separate liberties. So emerged, as will be more fully explained in a later chapter, the fiscal system that was to characterize the French monarchy until the Revolution of 1789.

Despotic  
adminis-  
tration  
of the  
taxes

Quite unwittingly, in his desire to circumvent the English, Charles helped to build up a power that was soon to overshadow the Valois kingdom itself. Since the eleventh century the duchy of Burgundy had continued its obscure existence under a collateral branch of the Capetian house,<sup>9</sup> which had also secured as an imperial fief the adjoining county of Burgundy, or Franche-Comté. Then, in 1361, the last of the old line died without heirs, leaving a young widow, Margaret of Flanders, granddaughter of the count slain at Crécy. Just at this time John of France had regained his freedom, and he at once took steps to

The new  
Burgun-  
dian  
dynasty

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 276.



provide for the succession to the two Burgundies. The duchy, as an escheat to the crown, he gave to Philip, the son who had shared his captivity abroad; and he prevailed upon the friendly emperor, Charles IV, to invest the prince with Franche-Comté also. The third prize to be disposed of was the widow Margaret, for she was heiress of Flanders. Momentarily the contest seemed won by Edward III, who succeeded in betrothing the lady to one of his sons. Nevertheless, Charles V, thanks to his influence at the papal court, was finally able to break off the match and to substitute his brother Philip. He could not know that what he considered a handsome diplomatic victory over the English would result in deadly peril for his own descendants.

The  
union of  
Burgundy  
and  
Flanders  
(1384)

On his death in 1380, Charles V left two sons: the elder, a boy of twelve, succeeded to the throne as Charles VI; the younger, Louis, was soon to become famous as the duke of Orléans. The old king had made careful provision for stabilizing the government during the minority of his heir, but his plans were upset by the group known as the Princes of the Lilies. They were the young king's four uncles, among whom the dominant figure was Philip of Burgundy. This ambitious duke was now able to devote the resources of the kingdom to assuring himself possession of Flanders. There the cities, fearful as always of French subjection, were again in revolt against the aged count. Philip, commanding a royal army, crushed their forces in 1382, and on the death of his father-in-law two years later, he formally took over the county. To overcome the last elements of resistance, he then solemnly confirmed the established liberties of the inhabitants.

Philip's statesmanlike action was of the utmost significance for the future of his house. By uniting Flanders with Burgundy, Charles V had hoped, to the detriment of the English, to bring the former under French influence. By 1385, it is true, the English cause in Flanders was dead; but the Flemings remained entirely loyal to their ancient traditions of independence, and with them they now triumphantly carried their new dynasty. Economically and politically the Burgundies were of second-rate importance; it was through Flanders that the duke attained front rank among the rulers of Europe. He was not merely a French baron; as the holder of Franche-Comté and certain territory on the Scheldt, he was also a prince of the Holy Roman Empire. And by arranging a double marriage with the house of Wittels-

bach in 1385, Philip made possible an enormous extension of the family possessions to the north and east.<sup>10</sup>

In harmony with his other diplomatic schemes, Philip in 1385 also arranged the marriage of Charles VI to the Wittelsbach princess, Isabelle of Bavaria, under whose frivolous leadership life at court became an unbroken round of riotous entertainment. Charles, however, could not be expected to content himself with such diversions indefinitely. In 1388 he suddenly dismissed his uncle of Burgundy and assumed personal control of the government, placing in power a group of his father's ministers whom the princes contemptuously dubbed the *Marmousets* (that is to say, the Monkeys). This change of administration likewise brought into prominence the king's younger brother. Talented and refined, a patron of art and literature, Louis of Orléans was also a prodigal, luxurious, dissolute, and callously selfish. Now, as honors and wealth were lavished upon him by his doting brother, he became, in the eyes of the dissatisfied, an embodiment of all that was evil in the state—the object of especially bitter attacks from the citizens of Paris and the doctors of the University. So the duke of Burgundy, capitalizing on his rival's unpopularity, posed as a champion of liberalism and constitutional reform.

Louis,  
Duke of  
Orléans

As long as Charles VI was merely a pleasure-loving incompetent, the situation was bad enough; it became infinitely worse when, in 1392, he suddenly went insane. This first attack, it is true, was short-lived; but thenceforth the malady constantly recurred, and each time it lasted longer. In 1404 Philip of Burgundy was succeeded by his son, John the Fearless—a small, ugly man who, beneath his mean exterior, concealed political ability of a high order. The appearance on the scene of this ambitious prince quickly brought what had been a sullen rivalry to a state of violent feud. While the growing insanity of the king tended to favor the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Orléans offset that advantage by ingratiating himself with the queen. It was after a visit to the apartments of this none too scrupulous lady that, on a certain evening in 1407, the king's brother was set upon by a band of armed men and assassinated. John of Burgundy, implicated by the ensuing investigation, eventually confessed that, under the prompting of Satan, he had instigated the murder. Fearing reprisals, he left Paris, only to return a little later when

The king's  
insanity  
and the  
outbreak  
of civil  
war

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 591; below, p. 636.

it appeared that his deed had made him a hero in the capital. And as the Orleanist faction, in default of legal remedy, took up arms against the Burgundians, the kingdom was soon torn apart by civil war. To aggravate the French misfortune, the English now renewed their offensive.

### 3. PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND

Edward  
III and  
parliament

Although Edward III was not himself a constructive statesman, his long reign was one of extreme importance for the development of parliamentary institutions. In the first place, the king's ease-loving disposition led him always to avoid troublesome conflicts over privilege; in the second place, his constant need of money for the war in France compelled him to establish many precedents of great constitutional significance. Under his grandfather the parliament had been a variable assembly which might contain, in addition to the baronage, representatives of the counties, of the boroughs, and of the lower clergy.<sup>11</sup> Under Edward III, although royal influence had little to do with it, the parliament took on the form which it was to keep for the next four centuries. In order to assert their proper independence of lay control, the clergy as such ceased to attend, preferring instead to vote the necessary subsidies in their own peculiar assembly, styled convocation. Indirectly, however, the church was represented by its prelates, the bishops and abbots who had been ranked as barons since the Norman Conquest.

The origin  
of the  
House of  
Lords

According to Magna Carta, when the king called a full meeting of his council, the greater barons were to be summoned by individual letters, the lesser barons by a general announcement read in the county courts.<sup>12</sup> Even then it is probable that only the more important suitors were required to attend; the rest, many of whom were too poor to afford the trip, would be excused from what was yet an obligation rather than a high honor. At any rate, by the time of Edward III, the lesser barons had entirely dropped out—with the result that the original parliament had become what we know as the House of Lords, the members of which constitute the English peerage. At first the peer owed his rank to the fact that his direct ancestor had received a personal summons to parliament. Subsequently dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons all came to be created by royal patent; but the

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 562.

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 558.

English law, as contrasted with continental custom, has always defined nobility as the equivalent of membership in the House of Lords. The wife, daughters, and younger sons of a peer bear only courtesy titles. Even the eldest son is not a peer until his father dies.

To this ancient half of the fourteenth-century parliament was now added the House of Commons. It came into existence as the knights of the shire and the burgesses were drawn by their nearly identical interests to hold joint deliberations. They were the Commons, not because they were ordinary people, but because they were deputies of the organized communities, or communes, of England. As yet no one cared how the members were elected; they legally represented the counties and boroughs in that the latter were bound by their vote. As the Lords spoke for the nobility, the Commons spoke for the landed gentry and the bourgeoisie. Politically the older house remained much the more influential for a long time to come. Nevertheless, as the Commons came to perfect their own peculiar organization under their Speaker, they gained increasing power, especially in all matters of financial administration. And the fact that they represented the great majority of taxpayers eventually found legal recognition in the principle that all money bills must originate in the lower house.

The origin  
of the  
House of  
Commons

Indeed, from Edward's point of view, the chief function of parliament was to give him subsidies. Under pressure of the war, his demands became more and more frequent—a situation which parliament used to good advantage. By holding up all grant of taxes until the king had redressed their grievances, the houses secured a series of valuable concessions. Thus it was definitely established by formal enactment that no direct tax could be levied without the consent of parliament. The question of indirect taxes remained somewhat vaguer, but in practice the king's right was restricted to tunnage and poundage, certain fixed customs on exports and imports which were voted to him for life. Furthermore, parliament adopted the plan of making all grants for specific purposes (that is to say, by appropriation) and of then exacting a statement of the royal accounts for audit by its appointees. Beyond that, the parliament as yet failed to make any very decided progress. Although Lords and Commons frequently united in petitioning for additional reforms, to which Edward graciously acceded, his promises were found to be of little practical worth. It was not until the following century that, by

Parlia-  
mentary  
control of  
taxation

compelling the kings to sign bills provided with penalties and means of enforcement, parliament was able to sharpen the edge of its authority.

Contrast  
between  
England  
and  
France

Even in the fourteenth century, however, the advance made in England toward a regular system of constitutional government was very remarkable, as contrasted with the failure of the Estates in France. Beginning with common elements, one state continued in the direction of limited monarchy; the other became a royal absolutism. This result was partly accounted for by the fact that England had been a compact and efficiently administered kingdom when France was only a collection of princely fiefs. In the latter country representative institutions were still inchoate when armed invasion produced a crisis that demanded desperate remedies. The English, to be sure, found the war no unmixed blessing, but they were spared the worst of the horrors experienced by the French. To such differences of circumstance, rather than to imaginary factors of racial inheritance, must be attributed the political divergence of the two peoples. In this same connection it is worth remarking that the famous bicameral system of England, which has gained so great a following throughout the world, was the consequence of sheer accident. Its advantages came to be appreciated long after it had actually emerged.

The  
system of  
equity

The reign of Edward III also witnessed the elaboration of much judicial and administrative machinery, to explain which would entail a long and technical discussion. Here only one new development of this sort may be mentioned—the equitable jurisdiction of the chancellor. At common law two kinds of remedies can be secured, damages or restitution of goods. Often, however, a situation arises when no amount of money can possibly compensate for a threatened injury. What is then needed is an order commanding some one to do or not to do something, i.e., an injunction. In cases of this sort, during the early period, the aggrieved party sent a petition to the king, appealing for relief on the ground that justice could not be obtained in the ordinary courts. Such petitions came to be turned over to the chancellor, the chief judicial officer of the crown, and in course of time he developed a special court known as chancery, where one might seek remedial measures of an extraordinary character. The law which he enforced was known as equity. Eventually it too came to follow certain fixed precedents, but it is still sharply distinguished from the older system in that it provides injunctions

and otherwise protects rights that the common law failed to recognize.

Efforts have been made to prove that Edward III was inspired by a wise foresight in economic matters, and it is true that his government showed sporadic interest in the development of a native woolen industry and of an English mercantile marine. For example, Edward established colonies of Flemish weavers in some of the boroughs and, at one time or another, he tried to bring the exporters of wool into a single organization, with their dealings concentrated in a particular town called the staple. If, however, he had any definite economic policy, it was constantly interfered with for the sake of additional taxes or of some temporary diplomatic advantage in Flanders, and the gains that he effected were more than offset by the prolongation of the war in France. Its net result, in spite of a few glorious battles, was a loss of territory. The cost was terrific, and although the English escaped invasion and brigandage, they were not spared by the Black Death. Toward the end of the reign there was increasing agitation against the corruption of the court and the evil counselors who systematically looted the treasury. As long as the crown prince lived, there was prospect of an improved administration; but he died prematurely in 1376, leaving as heir to the throne a nine-year-old boy.

The  
growth of  
unrest

Richard II, who became king in the following year, was thus too young to effect any change in the situation. The same ministers remained in power, largely controlled, as before, by the most prominent of the royal uncles, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. Although, as a matter of fact, he was no worse than most contemporary politicians, he assuredly was not the man to carry out the reforms demanded by public opinion. The result was a mounting discontent with the government, which, as always happens, was blamed for everything that people disliked. The peasantry had long-standing grievances against the landed aristocracy.<sup>13</sup> The decay of the gild system in the towns and the growth of capitalistic organizations in the major industries led to bitter complaints on the part of the artisan population.<sup>14</sup> The prevalent anarchy in the church stimulated fierce attacks upon many of the greater ecclesiastics, and a number of clergymen even

Richard II  
and the  
Great  
Revolt of  
1381

<sup>13</sup> See below, p. 631.

<sup>14</sup> See below, pp. 649 f.

turned to preaching subversive doctrines throughout the countryside.<sup>15</sup> Under such unfortunate circumstances, the men who acted in the name of Richard II now adopted a peculiarly stupid method of raising money for the miserable French war. This was a poll tax, supposed to be assessed on a sliding scale, but so administered that in the poorest districts the average inhabitant had to pay more than many of the rich in other districts.

After widespread opposition, an attempt to enforce collection of the tax in the spring of 1381 led to the outbreak of rioting, and within a short time the government was faced by a serious insurrection. Although there were risings in various parts of the country, the two main centers of disturbance were Essex and Kent. In the former the insurgents were chiefly peasants, in the latter artisans and other discontented townsmen. After local depredations had proved that they had little to fear, organized forces from the two regions advanced toward London. On June 13, through the aid of sympathizers inside the walls, they were admitted to the city, which for over twenty-four hours was the scene of unrestrained pillage and burning. On the following day, while the young king was holding a conference with the Essexmen and granting them charters of emancipation, the more violent of the rioters broke into the Tower. Two hated ministers—one of them the archbishop of Canterbury—were slain, and throughout the capital many other persons, for one reason or another, fell victims to the popular fury. Then, on June 15, Richard bravely met the Kentishmen and, after their leader had been killed, persuaded them to disperse.

The revolution of  
1399

Thus, except for isolated disturbances in the counties, the revolt of 1381 came to an end. Its significance in connection with literature and the decay of serfdom will be considered in the following chapters. As far as the political situation was concerned, it had few visible results. A general reaction against popular violence permitted the royal government to reassert its authority more effectively than ever. The charters that had been issued to the insurgent peasants were quashed and all disorders throughout the country were cruelly suppressed. The king, who had proved himself both brave and intelligent during the crisis, did not assume personal control of the administration until 1389, and by that time he had already gained the ill will of a powerful group

<sup>15</sup> See below, p. 669.

in parliament by his arrogant ways and his exaltation of the royal office. Though in many ways a very remarkable man, Richard II was unable to accomplish much as a practical ruler. For a while he acted cautiously; then, having built up a strong party at court, he threw off all restraint. The leaders of the baronial opposition were imprisoned, executed for treason, or banished from the kingdom. In 1398 an intimidated parliament voted the king what amounted to dictatorial powers and for a time it seemed as if Richard, like Charles V, might succeed in establishing an absolute monarchy.

Such a project was ruined by the king's senseless tyranny, which quickly destroyed whatever popularity he had thus far retained. By seizing the Lancastrian estates when John of Gaunt died in 1399, Richard gave all malcontents a natural leader in the duke's son, Henry. Through a combination of force and trickery the latter gained possession of the king and forced him to sign an abdication. This was accepted by the newly summoned parliament which, passing over the claims of the six-year-old earl of March,<sup>18</sup> gave the crown to Lancaster. Richard, not long afterwards, was murdered in prison. This political revolution had important consequences. Henry IV, lacking a good hereditary title to the throne, naturally sought in every way to assure the enthusiastic support of parliament. Its privileges, its control of taxation, its legislative authority, even its right to dictate appointments to the royal council, were all confirmed and extended during the Lancastrian régime. By such means, as well as by effectively suppressing a series of insurrections, Henry IV was able to leave to his son in 1413 a kingdom well satisfied with the new dynasty.

The young man of twenty-five who thus succeeded as Henry V, aside from the continuance of his father's successful policy, had only one ambition—that of military glory. The war which had languished for so many years should be revived; the just claims of the English to their ancient holdings on the continent should be enforced, and thereby an added splendor given to the house of Lancaster. In France, assuredly, there was little prospect of effective resistance to such an aggressive move. So in 1415 Henry took an army across the Channel and landed in Normandy, to repeat his grandfather's exploits of 1346.

Henry V  
(1413-22)

<sup>18</sup> Grandson of John of Gaunt's elder brother; see Table III, and below, p. 646.



## 4. JEANNE D'ARC AND THE CLOSE OF THE WAR

Armagnacs  
vs. Bur-  
gundians

By the time of Henry V's accession, all France had taken sides in the civil war. As the son of the murdered duke was still young and inexperienced, the leadership of the Orleanists fell to his father-in-law, the count of Armagnac, whose name was thenceforth attached to the faction. With him were arrayed in general the nobility of the south. The north, on the other hand, was strongly Burgundian, as were also the city of Paris and the University. John the Fearless, by his possession of the insane king, was the actual head of the royal administration. Yielding to popular clamor for reform, he called a meeting of the Estates in 1413. No one came, however, except Burgundian sympathizers, and while they were engaged in prolonged deliberation, the impatient populace of the capital burst into open revolt. For over three months Paris was terrorized by organized gangs of rioters, called Cabochiens after one Simon Caboché, a skinner. While the Estates drew up a lengthy ordinance, the duke of Burgundy did nothing to restore order—with the result that, before the end of the year, the city was swept by reaction. The Cabochiens were crushed, the Burgundians were driven out, the Estates were dissolved, and the Armagnacs were placed in control of the government.

The  
battle of  
Agincourt  
(1415)

This was still the situation when, in 1415, Henry V invaded Normandy. The duke of Burgundy, protesting his loyalty to the king, refused all support to an administration that had just proclaimed him a public enemy. The Armagnacs, he said, would have to fight their own battles. Thus it came about that the campaign against the English was undertaken by a group of feudal princes to whom all the reforms of Charles V, all the victories of Du Guesclin, all the bitter experience of the previous century were as nothing. With incredible folly, a glittering army of knights proceeded to attack Henry V at Agincourt precisely as the Black Prince had been attacked at Poitiers. The result was the same. An English force of about 10,000 repulsed and slaughtered a host that outnumbered it three to one. In consequence, while Henry advanced to the leisurely occupation of Normandy, the Armagnac government fell into complete discredit. As the months passed without visible signs of improvement in any direction, the capital became more and more restless. Finally, in 1418, Parisian conspirators once more admitted the

Burgundians, who celebrated their restoration to power by a ruthless massacre of their opponents, including the count of Armagnac himself. The remnants of the party, with the fifteen-year-old dauphin, fled to the south.

In 1419 Rouen fell after a brave defense, and Henry V prepared for the reconquest of the other Angevin territories. Actually, however, his position was far from secure. As long as the duke of Burgundy had been in opposition to the French government, he had found it advantageous to foster an understanding with the English. Now that he was again master of Paris, he had little use for a rival king in Normandy and could well afford to grant reasonable terms to the defeated Armagnacs. So, while continuing the threat of an English alliance, he opened negotiations with the dauphin, who had become the nominal chief of the hostile faction. By September, 1419, preliminaries of peace had been agreed on, and to provide a final confirmation, it was arranged that the two principals, accompanied by their retainers, should meet on the bridge at Montreuil. The conference took place at the stipulated time, but it brought no healing of the feud. Instead, mutual distrust led to the exchange of violent words, in the midst of which the duke was cut down by the Armagnac friends of the dauphin.

The  
murder of  
John the  
Fearless  
(1419)

No deed could have been better calculated to bring complete ruin to France, for the Burgundians immediately threw themselves into the arms of the English. In May, 1420, the Peace of Troyes was signed between Henry V and Charles VI. Actually, of course, the treaty was the work of Philip, the new duke of Burgundy, aided by the shameless queen who, as usual, thought only of preserving her position at court. The dauphin Charles was repudiated as being no lawful heir; on the death of Charles VI his throne should go to his "only true son," Henry of England, now married to the princess Catherine. Ratified by a meeting of Estates and sworn to by the University of Paris, the new settlement was at once put into effect. For a brief interval Henry V could regard himself as the ruler of both kingdoms. But at the age of only thirty-five, he suddenly fell a victim to disease, just before death also claimed the unfortunate Charles VI. Accordingly, in 1422, the new-born child of Henry and Catherine was proclaimed as Henry VI of England and Henry II of France.

The Peace  
of Troyes  
(1420)

Momentarily the change of sovereigns hardly affected the political situation. The two royal uncles, the dukes of Gloucester

Charles,  
"King of  
Bourges"  
(1422-29)

and Bedford were installed as regents, one in England and the other in France. Bedford proved himself an able soldier. Under him the English armies, acting in cooperation with the Burgundians, swept forward, occupying the country north of the Loire and laying siege to Orléans in 1428. Meanwhile the dauphin Charles, though a man in years, gave no evidence that he would ever play a man's part in the world. From his parents he had a wretched physical inheritance. Two elder brothers had died in infancy, and he himself had barely survived a series of illnesses that left him with a weak, shambling body and a mind that also seemed likely to give way at any time. As a matter of fact, Charles VII was later to demonstrate that he was by no means unintelligent; his trouble was rather the burden of doubt and despair that bore him down. From earliest childhood his life had been spent under a shadow of chronic fear and suspicion, and more recently the legitimacy of his birth had been denied by his own mother. It was no wonder that he now remained sunk in apathy, utterly hopeless and quite indifferent to affairs of state.

Superficially, the fortunes of the dauphin seemed in truth desperate. Throughout the north and west of France Henry VI was recognized as king. Charles remained uncrowned, leading a miserable existence in the gloomy castle of Chinon and hardly earning the title, King of Bourges, that was ironically allowed him by his foes. Yet the balance in his favor was really considerable. In the southeast and center of the country his authority was unquestioned, for the kingship was a matter of hereditary right, independent of the coronation ceremony. The Peace of Troyes rested not on the military strength of the English, but on the Burgundian hatred of the Armagnacs. The cause of Charles had been wrecked by the fact that he had identified himself with one party to a feud. If he would shake off the tutelage of his Armagnac ministers and assert the powers inherent in his office, he could not fail to gain widespread sympathy. Many important lords, notably the duke of Brittany, were at most neutral in the war. The English hold on Paris and the north could not survive the loss of the Burgundian support. In the face of a national awakening, Duke Philip might well prefer the desertion of his allies to the loss of his French fiefs. Yet Charles continued to do nothing until his proper rôle had been shown him by an illiterate peasant girl.

In all history there is no more amazing episode than the career of Jeanne d'Arc. Since she became not only a glorious heroine, but likewise a martyr and saint of the church, it is necessary in studying her career to give careful scrutiny to the sources of our information. For the life of Jeanne down to the time when she suddenly acquired fame we have, with one exception, no documentary evidence of any great value. The exception is the testimony given by the Maid herself when she was brought to trial in 1431. Although anti-clerical writers have sought to impugn what she then told her judges, there is, as will be explained below, no good reason to doubt her honesty. She was, she said, born in the village of Domrémy, the daughter of one Jacques Darc<sup>17</sup> and his wife Isabelle. She was not sure of her age; she thought that she was about nineteen—which would make the date of her birth about 1411. She had no book-learning, knowing "neither A nor B," but her mother had taught her to say her prayers, and also to spin and to sew. In that respect she was very proud of her skill. She resented being described as a shepherdess; she had not, she insisted, tended animals while she was at home.

Jeanne  
d'Arc at  
Domrémy

To these simple facts concerning her early life a few others of more general significance may be added. She had grown up since infancy under the direct influence of the civil war. Domrémy, on the border of Lorraine, was included within a small corner of Champagne that remained continuously loyal to the Valois house. In 1429 it was still being held for Charles by a detachment of royal troops stationed at Vaucouleurs under a captain named Robert de Baudricourt. The villagers, however, had lived in constant dread of Burgundian conquest. On one occasion Jeanne had been sent into Lorraine, where she stayed for two weeks with a friend of the family. Under such circumstances, neither she nor other peasant girls of her age needed instruction as to the evils from which the country was suffering. Jeanne knew how the English, in alliance with the Burgundians, had occupied royal territory. She had heard the pathetic story of the dauphin and she longed to see him delivered from his enemies and awarded lawful coronation. Furthermore, as she grew to adolescence, she became increasingly devout, spending hours in prayer and in mystic contemplation. She thought and dreamed of the blessed

<sup>17</sup> This was the original spelling of the name; it was later changed to d'Arc when the family was declared noble.

saints—of famous heroines in sacred history and of St. Michael, the heavenly warrior and patron of the Valois kings.

Her  
mission  
and the  
relief of  
Orléans  
(1429)

I was thirteen when I had a voice from God for my help and guidance. The first time that I heard this voice I was very much frightened; it was mid-day, in the summer, in my father's garden. . . . When I heard it for the third time, I recognized it as the voice of an angel. It said to me two or three times a week, "You must go into France. . . . Go, raise the siege which is being made before the city of Orléans. Go to Robert de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs; he will furnish you with an escort." . . . It was St. Michael. I saw him before my eyes; he was not alone, but quite surrounded by the angels of heaven.

So she testified in 1431.<sup>18</sup> Did she really hear the voices and see the angels, or was she suffering from hallucinations? The historian has no way of deciding this question. He may deduce that presumably her experiences were purely subjective, for in later years, as she constantly reported having talked with angels, people beside her failed to see or hear anything extraordinary. And he may be certain that the messages were very real to her. Otherwise, why should she have acted as she did?

Early in 1429 Jeanne went to Baudricourt, who, being persuaded of her sacred mission, provided her with a suit of armor and an escort of six soldiers. With them she made the ten-day journey through hostile country to Chinon. There, after careful examination, she finally convinced the suspicious king that she was divinely sent to aid him. So she obtained from him a force of troops and in May set out for Orléans, announcing to the English by a most remarkable proclamation that she had been commissioned by Almighty God "to drive them out of the whole kingdom of France." In relieving the city, she displayed good sense by attacking the besiegers from the north, where they had as yet failed to erect fortifications. Otherwise she needed little generalship, for the French fervently believed that they were being led by an angel from heaven, while the English feared her as a devil from hell. Having driven the enemy in panic from the intervening territory, the Maid in July brought Charles to Reims, where he was crowned.

This, in itself, was a marvelous reversal of fortune; and if the

<sup>18</sup> The preceding extracts are from the documents translated by T. Douglas Murray (see below, p. 766).

king had shown any nobility of character, his success would have been much more brilliant. Half a dozen northern French towns at once opened their gates to the royal forces; even Paris seemed on the point of once more changing sides. But Charles listened to the counsels of his jealous ministers and gave scant support to the heroic girl who had gained him his crown. While he relapsed into his old mode of life, she made a vain attack on Paris, in the course of which she was wounded. Charles then signed a truce with Burgundy and ordered the cessation of hostilities, but Jeanne with a few devoted followers went ahead with the war anyhow. Finally, in May, 1430, she was captured while bravely leading a sortie from the beleaguered city of Compiègne. Charles, to his everlasting discredit, made no offer of ransom; so the Burgundian captor handed her over to the English, who were only too glad to pay the sum demanded.

Her  
capture,  
trial, and  
execution  
(1430-31)

The tragic sequel was inevitable. By that time the witchcraft delusion had taken firm hold on the minds even of the educated.<sup>19</sup> In English eyes Jeanne was unquestionably a witch; the matter of her condemnation was merely a detail. At Rouen, in the spring of 1431, she was placed before a special court of French clergy headed by the bishop of Beauvais, who had been driven from his diocese by the royal advance. He and his associates, of course, gave her no chance of acquittal. In spite of her courageous and witty defense, the court declared her guilty of heresy. At the reading of the accusation, Jeanne broke down and confessed her guilt; but later, after being sent back to jail, she reasserted her unflinching faith in her mission and denounced her confession as sheer cowardice. As a result, the court had the pleasure of sentencing her as a relapsed heretic. She was then given over to the secular government and burned in the public square of Rouen, May 30, 1431.

The death of Jeanne d'Arc was hailed with delight by the English and their partisans; yet by making their pitiful captive a martyr they did not better their cause. The Maid had announced to the world that her mission was to drive the invaders out of the whole kingdom. She had not done so; instead, she had been repulsed, wounded, and taken prisoner. Alive, she had not proved invincible; dead, she became the spiritual embodiment of a patriotic cause. Its progress was slow, but eventually the demand

The final  
victory of  
Charles  
VII

<sup>19</sup> See below, pp. 681 f.

for a national monarchy grew so strong as to overcome even the inertia of Charles VII. By 1433 the last of his old Armagnac advisers had disappeared and he was brought under the influence of ministers with a forward-looking policy. Thenceforth his reign became a series of triumphs. In 1435 Philip of Burgundy, foreseeing the inevitable failure of the English, signed a separate peace at Arras. Bedford died soon after, and under his incompetent successors the English hold on northern France rapidly weakened. Paris surrendered to Charles in 1436. A truce permitted him to reestablish the military system of his grandfather. Then, with the renewal of hostilities in 1449, English resistance collapsed. Despite the lethargy of the king and the exhaustion of his country, his armies steadily advanced. The reconquest of Normandy was followed by the invasion of Guienne. The Gascons put up a stubborn fight, but the last of the English strongholds, Bordeaux, fell in 1453, and the war was over. Of the entire kingdom which Henry V had thought to assure to his son, there remained only Calais.

At last Charles decided that something ought to be done for Jeanne d'Arc; it should not be allowed to stand on the record that so glorious a king had been saved by a witch. Accordingly, by papal authorization, the case was reopened at Rouen in 1456. The lengthy process turned into a eulogy for the martyred girl. All the errors in the previous trial were blamed on the bishop of Beauvais, now dead, and the judgment was reversed—belated thanks for the winning of a crown and the reinvigoration of a kingdom.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### WESTERN EUROPE IN THE LATER FIFTEENTH CENTURY

#### I. THE DECAY OF FEUDALISM

THE mediæval period witnessed the perfection in Europe of three great mechanical inventions. The mariner's compass has already been mentioned in the preceding pages; the printing press will be discussed below in connection with humanism; here we are concerned with the gun and its effect upon warfare in the later Middle Ages. In spite of all that has been written on the subject, the origin of gunpowder remains obscure. The explosive properties of saltpeter mixed with sulphur and charcoal were known to Roger Bacon, who got at least some of his information from Arabic sources.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the oriental world had long been familiar with various kinds of fireworks, and certain incendiary mixtures, notably Greek fire, had often been used in battles on both land and sea. These latter substances, however, did not propel themselves; they were hurled by catapults or other siege engines. There is no evidence that either Bacon or any of his contemporaries ever saw a cannon. How or when the first one came to be made we do not know. All that can be affirmed is that by 1350 the invention had already appeared in several regions of Europe.

The inven-  
tion of  
cannon

The earliest cannon were constructed by welding iron bars to form a cylinder, with rings fitted on the outside to give added strength. Since balls of stone were employed for projectiles, the tube had to be very large and heavy. It was not provided with wheels; so all that could be done with it was to wedge it into place and leave it there. The usefulness of such a gun, obviously, was extremely limited. It could not be easily transported, and, aside from frightening the horses of the enemy, could do little damage in the field. When placed on fortifications, its recoil tended to knock them over. By constantly threatening to burst, it might be more of a danger to its possessors than to any one else. Nevertheless, the primitive cannon proved their worth in sieges. If fired

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 209, 519.



from a distance of a hundred yards or so, they could be counted on to hit a wall with considerable regularity. And as attackers gained skill in the use of the clumsy weapons, all the military architecture of the previous age was rendered obsolete.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the fifteenth century the feudal castle was a vestige of the past; its moats had been filled in and it had been turned into a mere dwelling house. The French word *château* came to designate a mansion rather than a fortress.

Changes in military tactics This change naturally enhanced the importance of operations in the field; otherwise it was a long time before gunpowder had any effect upon military tactics. Neither field artillery nor fire-arms became prominent in battles before the sixteenth century. Until then the knight's armor kept its defensive value, attaining, indeed, its greatest elaboration just before it went out of use. First one part of the old link mail and then another had given way to plates of steel. Now, finally, these plates were cleverly joined in the complete suit of armor which covered the warrior from head to toe and made him relatively immune from injury as long as he was on his horse. Dismounted, he was of little worth except when he stood on the defensive, and in that position the wars of the fourteenth century proved that ordinary footmen armed with long pikes or halberds were just as effective, especially when their flanks were protected by archers. The peculiar value of the latter lay in the fact that their missiles could serve either to stop an enemy's charge (as at Crécy) or to prepare for a charge from one's own side (as at Falkirk). By the end of the Hundred Years' War it had therefore become evident that a first-class army should include three distinct forces: cavalry for offense, infantry for defense, and bowmen to serve in either capacity. Besides, a unit of artillery should be available for the reduction of fortresses. Feudal combat had yielded to a very complicated art of war.

The political decay of the feudal aristocracy Meanwhile, too, the political power of the feudal class had been seriously undermined. In both France and England the ancient system of tenures had now become virtually obsolete, for they had ceased to be of vital importance to the state.<sup>3</sup> The kings no longer had to depend on their vassals for revenue, armies, courts of justice, or other organs of government. The monarchy was now solidly established on a broader support than that of

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 563.

feudal services—could, in fact, afford to dispense with the latter altogether. This had been true of England since the reign of Edward I; of France it was temporarily true under Charles V, and his régime was restored by Charles VII. In each case the reform was made possible by the improved financial resources of the crown. A large mercenary army and a permanent royal administration in the hands of expert assistants could not be maintained without a relatively large expenditure of cash, and, directly or indirectly, the bulk of this cash was drawn from trade. The constitutional developments of the later Middle Ages were primarily due to the economic revolution that had earlier produced a striking revival of urban life.

While the feudal aristocracy of western Europe was thus yielding preeminence in the state to the encroaching power of the monarchy, it was also losing control over the rural population. Even before the Hundred Years' War the peasantry had made considerable progress,<sup>4</sup> which was one cause of the unrest that characterized the fourteenth century. As long as the masses had no prospect of bettering their status, they would submit to an apparently inevitable fate; but when on all sides they could observe individuals and communities who had risen out of the old inferiority, they came to chafe under their own bondage. The popular discontent was aggravated by certain consequences of the Black Death. That pestilence, although at the time it seemed an overwhelming calamity, left the surviving peasants in a very advantageous situation, for the unprecedented shortage of labor brought a steep rise both in wages and in the price of agricultural produce. And when the landlords tried to enforce the old manorial services, their efforts were often met by open resistance. Besides, there were political grievances which, as we have seen, helped to produce the Jacquerie in France and the English revolt of 1381. In a way, perhaps, the ultimate effect of such outbreaks was to stimulate the movement toward emancipation. The landed aristocracy might well decide, by wise concessions, to avoid similar disturbances in the future. The immediate result, however, was rather a sharp reaction that left the insurgents worse off than before. If the masses eventually secured freedom, it was

The final  
breakdown  
of the  
manorial  
system

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 496. It should be remembered that the discussion in the following pages deals only with the western kingdoms of Europe. To the eastward serfdom continued for many centuries to come.

largely due not to insurrection, but to the operation of economic forces.

Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the manorial system continued to weaken. More and more the landlords found it to their advantage to commute the obligations of their servile tenants and to use the proceeds for hiring the necessary labor. The lands which had earlier been cultivated by villeins they now leased to farmers.<sup>5</sup> Under this régime the typical peasant, aside from various extraordinary services, became responsible only for the fixed rent or *cens* that remained as a burden on the land. Whenever he pleased, he could sell his holding and go elsewhere. As his personal dependence on the lord thus came to an end, he became economically free; his legal servitude ceased to have any meaning and was either formally abolished or allowed to be forgotten. Both in England and in France the great mass of the people had secured full liberty by the end of the mediæval period, and their tenures soon came to enjoy the protection of the royal courts—in the one country as copyhold, in the other as *censive*. Only a few serfs, in the more backward of the French provinces, remained to be freed by the Revolution of 1789.

The  
decadent  
chivalry  
of the  
fourteenth  
century

How profoundly the position of the feudal aristocracy in state and society had been changed since the age of the crusades is evident without further comment. Yet the lower the noble sank in actual importance, the more extravagantly he flaunted his pride of birth and his chivalrous traditions. Although men were probably no less brutal in the more primitive period, they lived a life which better comported with their character. They were quite frank in their coarseness, not having as yet learned to affect a courtly refinement which they did not possess. Their chivalry was not a matter of luxurious ostentation, as it was in the fourteenth century. Kings like Philip VI and Edward III surrounded themselves with a raffish splendor which ill concealed the general worthlessness of their character. The reign of Charles V provided a brief example of wisdom and sobriety in high office, but it was followed by the frightful relapse under Charles VI, when all standards of sense and decency seemed to have been destroyed. And unfortunately for England, the Lancastrian régime was to end in a similar period of disorder.

<sup>5</sup> The farm originally was the sum of money (*firma*) paid as rent for the holding of any source of income; see above, p. 380. Eventually, as land came to be farmed out to a farmer, it became known as a farm.

One of our best sources for the decadent feudalism of the later Middle Ages is the famous chronicle of Jean Froissart. He was born about 1338 at Valenciennes, a prosperous town belonging to the count of Hainaut. Disliking trade, young Jean deserted that calling for the church—not so much through the impulse of religion as in order to follow a literary career. First he devoted himself to poetry, producing conventional lyrics that were at least good enough to attract the attention of wealthy patrons. He thus gained letters of introduction to the English queen, Philippa of Hainaut, and it was to her that he presented a rhymed chronicle about some of the recent wars. Thanks to her appreciation, Froissart received funds for the continuation of the project. The years following the Peace of Calais he spent in constant travels, talking to veterans of the previous campaigns and accumulating a mass of notes on their adventures. After the death of the queen, the duke of Brabant gave him the parish of Lestines, and there he composed the first 471 chapters of his prose chronicle. By 1386 he had run out of materials, and so he undertook a fresh series of journeys, in the course of which he saw most of the southern French provinces and revisited England. His account closes with the year 1400, about which time he presumably died.

Froissart  
and his  
chronicle

Once Froissart was considered a great authority on the Hundred Years' War; now his gossip is taken more for what it is worth. In describing the earlier wars, he relied on existing chronicles, together with the yarns that he picked up through interviews with leading participants. Obviously, therefore, Froissart's narrative down to the Peace of Calais is not in a class with Villehardouin's memoirs of the Fourth Crusade or Joinville's biography of St. Louis. He gives us nothing beyond the uncritical repetition of hearsay. The best part of his chronicle is that written toward the end of the century, in which he reported what he himself had seen and heard. But even here we must distinguish between the author's opinion and the actuality. Since the elder Froissart dealt in armorial decorations and other trappings of the nobility, we may imagine that Jean grew up under the spell of great names and elegant manners. As a man, he continued to be dazzled by brilliant exteriors. Of real human character he seems never to have gained the slightest understanding. To him a title and a fine suit of clothes made a splendid gentleman. For the doings of his own bourgeois class he had nothing but con-

tempt; for the miseries of the peasantry he had no sympathy. Pillage and massacre he calmly refers to as the necessary accompaniment of some "honorable enterprise" or "noble adventure." Men whom we know from other sources to have been debauchees and cold-blooded murderers parade through his chapters as gallant heroes. And as far as national feeling was concerned, Froissart evidently had no suspicion that such a thing could exist. Although he wrote in French, he was rather a Fleming than a Frenchman. He represents to perfection the feudal tradition, that war was a matter of personal rivalry—a sort of major sport for princes.

We should not, however, blame Froissart too severely for not being what he never pretended to be. In his invocation to the Creator he asks merely for inspiration to persevere in his undertaking, "that all readers of my work may derive from it pleasure and instruction, and that I may fall into their good graces." Froissart sought to be only a good story-teller, and that he was. His meandering tales of chivalrous deeds have endeared themselves to countless generations; and aside from the superficial charm of what he tells, his narrative is of great interest to the student of social conditions in that it so vividly reflects the aristocratic prejudices of the age. Froissart, indeed, would deserve mention, if for no other reason, because he affords such a striking contrast with Commynes, whose work will be considered immediately below.

## 2. LOUIS XI AND THE FALL OF BURGUNDY

Louis as  
dauphin

The illustrious son of Charles VII was born in 1423, at the opening of the melancholy period when his father was styled King of Bourges. By the time that the royal authority was being reasserted throughout France, Louis had entered his teens and was already on bad terms with the king. As dauphin, he allowed himself to be associated with a feudal rising of the great nobles in 1440. It was easily put down and Louis was pardoned his youthful indiscretion; but seven years later, finding the parental authority intolerable, he left the court and retired to his own territory of Dauphiné, where for some time he ruled as an independent prince. Thus occupied, he was happy and successful, proving himself an able administrator, especially interested in the economic development of the country. Charles, glad to be rid of the restless dauphin, left him to his own devices until he flatly



disobeyed a royal command by allying with Savoy and marrying the count's daughter. Then the king sent an army across the Rhone, and Louis hastily sought refuge with the duke of Burgundy.

Philip the  
Good,  
duke of  
Burgundy  
(1419-67)

Philip the Good, who succeeded John the Fearless in 1419, was the most resplendent prince of western Europe. From his father he inherited Burgundy, Franche-Comté, Flanders, and Artois. From one cousin he secured Brabant and Luxemburg; from another, as the result of his grandfather's Wittelsbach alliance,<sup>6</sup> Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Hainaut. In addition, he bought the county of Namur and installed various relatives in the bishoprics of Liège, Utrecht, and Cambrai. Under him, for the first time since the collapse of Charlemagne's empire, the region of the Netherlands was brought into political union. In 1435, as we have seen, Philip signed the Peace of Arras with Charles VII. By its terms the king promised to punish the murderers of the late duke and to found in his honor a monastery at Montereau. Besides—and these were the more practical articles—Charles ceded to Philip various territories already in Burgundian occupation, together with the cities and castles of the Somme Valley, which could be redeemed only by the payment of 400,000 gold crowns. Philip was freed of all feudal service and his lands were exempted from all royal taxes.

The  
accession  
of Louis  
XI (1461)

As the virtually independent ruler of an extensive and prosperous territory, the Burgundian duke lacked but two steps of attaining ultimate success. In the first place, he needed Alsace and Lorraine to combine in one well-rounded unit the Burgundies and the Low Countries; in the second place, he coveted the royal title. Haunted by these ambitions, Philip the Good lived in magnificent state, holding his court normally in one of his northern cities, which rivaled those of Italy as centers of luxury and artistic production.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, when the dauphin fled the parental wrath, the duke welcomed him as a hostage for the future, thinking through him to restore Burgundian predominance in France. Louis, too, was anxious to have Charles VII's reign come to an end, but for a different reason. Finally, in 1461, the news arrived that the old king was dead. Philip, at the head of a splendid cavalcade, escorted his protégé to Reims, where he presided over the coronation. Thence he advanced to Paris, expecting to be-

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 614.

<sup>7</sup> See below, pp. 716 f.

come actual master of the kingdom. That prospect soon faded, for Louis XI, having allowed the duke to pay for all the gorgeous ceremonial of his accession, showed no inclination to share authority with any one. Before the year was out, the disillusioned Philip was back in his own country.

The new king, meanwhile, was already hard at work on the task of rebuilding his kingdom—one which he dropped only at the moment of his death. When he came to power, he was a mature man of thirty-eight. Long ago he had outgrown his youthful recklessness; had learned the patience, craft, and perseverance which were to characterize his reign and make it a signal triumph. Physically, Louis XI inherited the feebleness of his Valois ancestors. He was small and weak. His legs were hardly strong enough to hold him up. His face was singularly unattractive—pale, almost cadaverous with its sunken eyes, long thin nose, and prominent bones. To make up for these deficiencies, his mental equipment was unsurpassed and, in spite of his unhappy youth, he had received a good education. Clear-sighted, indefatigable, and relentless, the king knew precisely what he wanted and, to attain his ends, he willingly sacrificed every other consideration. Disliking war, he used his army only as a last resort. Customarily he relied rather on diplomacy, in which he proved himself a master of consummate skill. All who opposed his will were to find him a hateful tyrant; even his loyal subjects might complain of his harsh and grasping administration. Yet Louis XI was not senselessly cruel. Men who served him faithfully received just treatment. And although he was extremely parsimonious in little ways, he spared no expense when vital issues were at stake.

The king's  
character

Such a king, obviously, was not a paragon of chivalry. He seemed, in fact, deliberately to make himself as little the gallant gentleman as possible. Immediately after the funeral of Charles VII had been concluded with fitting pomp, Louis put aside all the trappings of royalty and thenceforth appeared in a cheap traveling costume—a long coat of fustian and a wide-brimmed pilgrim's hat, decorated with small pewter figures of the Virgin and the saints. On appropriate occasions one of these would be removed for the sake of a short prayer; then it would be clapped back into place. For the king was superficially very pious, attending mass every day and by other conventional acts always seeking the aid of heaven in his enterprises, both honest and dishonest.



Normally his days were spent in constant journeys about his kingdom, in every corner of which he took a proprietary interest. He detested all ostentation, moving about with a few mean-looking servants, refusing all entertainment, and stopping at a public inn or with some local merchant. His bourgeois tastes and sympathies were shown in many other ways. The towns, in return for heavy taxes, received his especial protection and encouragement. The feudal class he jealously kept from all power in the state. As ministers he chose only men who owed everything to his patronage. For confidential agents he often preferred low-born rascals, like his notorious barber, Olivier le Daim—sometimes even convicts let out of jail for that particular purpose.

Charles  
the Rash,  
duke of  
Burgundy  
(1467-77)

As Philip the Good was now too old to engage in active reprisals against the faithless king, that task devolved upon his son Charles, known as the count of Charolais until his inheritance of the ducal crown in 1467. The young prince was a dashing figure. Strong, athletic, handsome, and likable, he was not only a brave knight but an able and intelligent ruler. Though living in great magnificence, he was sober, chaste, and sincerely religious. The one fatal flaw in his character was indicated by his nickname, Charles the Rash (*le Téméraire*). Goaded by ambition, he was never satisfied with a moderate program of achievement. Instead, he recklessly threw himself into a series of grandiose projects, refusing in his pride ever to retreat before superior strength or ever to heed the advice of the cautious. The contrast between the two great antagonists, Charles of Burgundy and Louis of France, was therefore a striking one, which gave to their struggle a certain epic character—made it an apt theme for the political philosopher. Fortunately one was at hand to do it justice.

Commines  
and his  
memoirs

Philippe de Commines was born in 1447 at the castle from which he took his name. His father was a Flemish nobleman of high standing in the Burgundian service. Philip the Good, in fact, had stood godfather to the boy, and as the latter was early left an orphan, the duke brought him up at court and eventually named him as squire to the young count of Charolais. Under Charles the Rash, Commines rose to be councilor and chamberlain, fighting in the early campaigns against Louis XI and acting as one of the duke's most trusted advisers. In 1468 he met the king,<sup>8</sup> who four years later prevailed on him to abandon his position with Charles and to accept one of equal rank in France.

<sup>8</sup> This was during Louis XI's visit at Péronne; see below, p. 640.

Perhaps Commynes had already sensed the fact that sooner or later the Burgundian cause was doomed to fail; at any rate, he served Louis faithfully and in return enjoyed the king's unbroken confidence. In the following reign Commynes lost his honors at court and so came to devote his last years to the writing of his memoirs, the finest historical composition in Europe since the decay of ancient culture.

In sharp contrast to Froissart, Commynes was never satisfied with the superficial. The comings and goings of men, their public acts and declarations, were in themselves, he felt, of subordinate interest; what fascinated him was the interplay of motives behind the scenes. He saw in war and politics a game played by statesmen. Which were the best moves? Why were certain ones decisive? How did they come to be taken? Specifically, what were the qualities of Louis XI which allowed him to win the victory over an apparently superior adversary? The preoccupation of Commynes with statecraft was typical of an age when feudalism had given way to what we know as international relations. By recognizing the truth that in such matters the precepts of religion and ethics were without force, Commynes revealed an attitude similar to that which was to be more frankly expressed by Machiavelli. But the earlier writer owed nothing to the humanism of Italy. His mental horizon was that of a fifteenth-century Frenchman who carried on the traditions of Villehardouin by reporting what he himself had observed. His book is a model of scrupulous honesty and penetrating thought—not an amusing string of anecdotes, but an objective study of human character and accomplishment.

Louis inaugurated his reign by redeeming the Somme Valley for the amount stipulated in the Peace of Arras; then, almost at once, he had to give it back. In 1465 the great nobles, thinking the occasion favorable for checking the king's autocratic ambitions, joined the duke of Burgundy in a coalition which they grandiloquently styled the League of Public Weal. And they persuaded the king's brother Charles, duke of Berry, to accept the nominal leadership. Louis, forced to retire behind the walls of Paris, found it necessary to submit. So he granted all that was asked. Burgundy retained the Somme Valley without repaying the money, the king's brother secured Normandy in place of Berry, and the rest of the leaguers also received suitable awards. Very conveniently for the king, and not without his encourage-

The  
League of  
Public  
Weal  
(1465).

ment, the bourgeois of Liège now rebelled against their bishop, and while this affair was diverting the attention of the Burgundians, Louis by a combination of bribes and threats broke up the League of Public Weal. The king's brother was embroiled in a war with his one-time ally, the duke of Brittany, and, to save him, Normandy was restored to royal control. A meeting of Estates justified the action by declaring the duchy inalienable from the crown.

The  
interview  
at Péronne  
(1468)

Meanwhile, in 1467, Charles the Rash formally succeeded his father in Burgundy and by the next year was again directing his efforts against France. Threatened by another feudal coalition, Louis decided on a personal interview with the new duke and so, relying on a safe-conduct, went to Péronne with only a small escort in October, 1468. Two days were spent in futile negotiation; then fugitives suddenly arrived from Liège, reporting that the bishop had been murdered in the course of a fresh insurrection under the auspices of French agents. Charles, raging with anger, imprisoned the king and for many hours debated whether or not to put him to death. Commynes tells us how he used his influence to prevent an irreparable tragedy and how Charles finally dictated a treaty, to which Louis swore on the holiest relics that could be found. He would in person lead an army to punish the rebels; he would compensate his brother with the county of Champagne; and he guaranteed that in future the Burgundian lands should enjoy complete independence of the royal courts.

Part of this agreement Louis at once had to carry out. He accompanied Charles to Liège, which was taken and burned—an event of which Commynes gives us an eyewitness account. Humiliated, but well content with his bargain, the king then returned to Paris, where he at once resumed his old tactics. His brother—who, it may readily be seen, was no intellectual giant—was persuaded to take Guienne in place of Champagne, and so was removed from the Burgundian neighborhood. Various conspirators were bought off; others were jailed. A meeting of nobles, clergy, and royal officials declared the Peace of Péronne, as well as the previous treaty, null and void. Following these preliminaries, Louis in 1471 suddenly took an army into Picardy and seized the principal positions on the Somme; and although Charles swore vengeance, he was able to accomplish little against the devious royal diplomacy. The duke of Brittany was defeated and forced

to sign peace. The count of Armagnac was killed in battle. The count of Alençon was condemned for treason and saved from the scaffold only by abject submission. The king's brother conveniently died.

Meanwhile, toward the end of 1472, Charles had signed a truce with Louis which was now allowed to run on indefinitely. The reason was that the duke had become involved in far-reaching projects that led him in the other direction. Having completed his control of the low Countries by securing Gelderland, he advanced upon Alsace, where the rights of the local princes were either purchased or usurped. In 1473 the climax came with a treaty forced on the duke of Lorraine, by which the latter country was also brought under Burgundian occupation. With the virtual restoration of the ancient Lotharingia, Charles lacked only a suitable title; so he made what seemed a very handsome offer to the emperor, Frederick III.<sup>9</sup> Maximilian, the son of the latter, was to be married to Mary, the daughter and heiress of Charles, who was to be elected king of the Romans. The Habsburg, however, was suspicious, and his reluctance was naturally encouraged by Louis XI, who finally had the satisfaction of seeing the scheme fail. By this time, too, French diplomacy was steadily gaining the advantage in a dozen other quarters—in England, in Italy, in the Rhinelands, and wherever else there was smoldering opposition to the Burgundian aggrandizement.

The Burgundian occupation of Alsace and Lorraine (1473)

The king's foremost success was among the Swiss. Having gained their independence through the paralysis of the royal authority in Germany, they had no liking for the new and powerful monarchy that was taking form on their western border. In 1474, on the assurance of a French subsidy, they declared war on Burgundy in alliance with the duke of Lorraine and various Alsatian rebels. By 1476 Charles had crushed the revolts, conquered Lorraine, and prepared an offensive into Switzerland. But in March his army was sharply repulsed at Granson, and when, in June of the same year, he dispatched a greater force, it was totally defeated by the mountaineers at Morat. The result of these astonishing battles was a fresh rising in Lorraine. Charles, furious, laid siege to Nancy, and the Swiss, heading a German coalition, came to its relief. The rash duke, though twice beaten and now outnumbered two to one, insisted on attacking. Again

The Swiss victories: Death of Charles the Rash (1477)

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 601; also Tables VII, VIII.

his cavalry broke and scattered before the unshaken masses of the confederate pikemen, and this time Charles himself remained on the stricken field (January 5, 1477).

The triumph of  
Louis XI

The delight of Louis XI and the dismay of certain French grandees when they heard the tragic news are graphically described by Commynes. The emotions were justified, for henceforth the king was to be undisputed master of his realm. Despite the fact that Charles left an heiress, Louis proceeded to confiscate his fiefs as forfeit to the crown. Without difficulty the royal troops occupied all Picardy, Artois, Burgundy, and Franche-Comté, although the last was imperial territory. He likewise sought to take Flanders, but there he overreached himself. The Flemings rallied to the support of the girl who was herself a native of their country, and she, in revenge for the royal perfidy, accepted marriage with Maximilian of Austria. Thus a Habsburg prince was installed as ruler of the Netherlands and claimant to the whole Burgundian heritage—an event of prime importance for the future of Europe. Yet Louis was able to arrange what seemed a very advantageous settlement, for Mary's sudden death in 1482 left Maximilian's position rather precarious and he was glad to sign peace. While retaining Flanders, he abandoned the duchy of Burgundy and ceded Franche-Comté and Artois as dowry with his daughter, now betrothed to the dauphin Charles. Lorraine and Alsace were restored to their previous status.

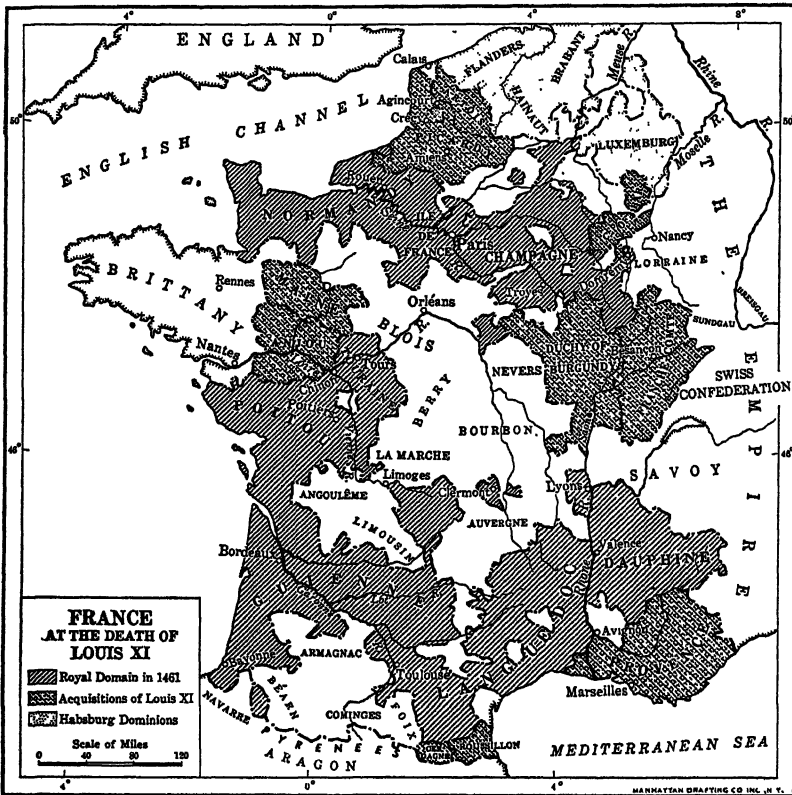
Before this affair had been settled, Louis had another windfall. The extinction of the Angevin house, also descended from a brother of Charles V,<sup>10</sup> gave him the duchy of Anjou and the counties of Maine, Bar, and Provence, the two latter of which lay outside the old French kingdom. By territorial encroachment and by alliance with the Swiss, now reputed the finest soldiers in Europe, the king's influence was thus brought to dominate the imperial borderlands as far north as the Habsburg holdings in the Low Countries. Aside from Flanders, only one of the great mediæval fiefs was still independent of royal control—the duchy of Brittany, which was to be secured for the crown by Anne de Beaujeu, named by the will of Louis XI as regent for her young brother, Charles VIII.

<sup>10</sup> Louis, second son of King John, had secured not only the duchy of Anjou, but the other possessions of the earlier Angevin house descended from Louis VIII; see Tables II, VII.

## 3. THE GROWTH OF ABSOLUTISM

At the death of Charles V in 1380 France seemed assured of a powerful monarchy; it was the unhappy accident of Charles VI's insanity that was responsible for the civil war and the ensuing chaos. Inevitably, as order came to be restored under

Absolute monarchy in France



Charles VII, he fell back on the precedents of his grandfather's reign. And his system, perfected by Louis XI, remained the basis of the French government until the Revolution of 1789. The crucial point in this constitutional development was the king's acquisition of authority to lay taxes without a formal grant by central Estates. Thanks to his fiscal independence, he was able to maintain a standing army, to legislate by means of decree, and to change the details of his administration very much as he

pleased. The royal absolutism gave frequent cause for complaint, but it had been evolved as a cure for desperate evils in the state and it continued to have the ardent support of the people as a whole. There was, in fact, no substitute; a parliamentary government like that of England had no place in a kingdom devoid of institutional unity. Louis XI called only one general meeting of Estates, that to support his action in taking Normandy from his brother; otherwise he preferred assemblies of selected notables, which could be counted on to register assent as a mere formality. The provincial Estates that still existed hardly dared to oppose his will.

Fiscal and  
judicial  
organiza-  
tion

By the latter half of the fifteenth century the king's right to certain arbitrary taxes had thus been definitely recognized. They were (1) the *taille*, a direct tax paid in general by the non-noble classes; (2) the *aides*, indirect taxes on the sales of various articles; and (3) the *gabelle*, a tax on salt. The second and third were usually farmed out to syndicates which advanced the king definite sums for the privilege of making the collections. The first was normally apportioned among fiscal districts called *généralités* and *élections* after the *généraux* and *élus* who administered them.<sup>11</sup> There was, however, no uniformity. In some regions, notably Languedoc and Normandy, the royal tax had to be voted and assessed by local Estates. So the kingdom was said to consist of two kinds of provinces: the *pays d'états* and the *pays d'élection*. This distinction, together with a hundred others that affected separate persons, classes, communities, and places, remained to the very end characteristic of the Old Régime in France.

In the administration of justice there was similar diversity of practice. The *parlement* at Paris normally acted as a supreme court for all France, but the variation of the law from region to region made complete centralization impossible. Charles VII had established a local *parlement* for Languedoc at Toulouse, and one for Dauphiné at Grenoble; Louis XI added one for Guienne at Bordeaux and one for Burgundy at Dijon. Much the same functions had already come to be exercised by ancient courts in Normandy and Champagne.<sup>12</sup> These tribunals all administered ordinary law, following established precedents and observing a regular procedure. Cases of treason and other trials in which

<sup>11</sup> See above, pp. 609, 613.

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 567.

the king took a particular interest he removed for arbitrary judgment before his council. As may be seen from such examples, the one institution that was common to all France was the monarchy.

Despite his oppressive taxation and tyrannical ways, Louis XI deserved well of his country, for he made its interests his own. The flood of money that he brought into the treasury he spent not for sumptuous entertainment and vainglorious wars, but for the defense and consolidation of the state. The standing army of his father—organized in regular companies of cavalry, infantry, and artillery—he increased and improved at heavy expense. Yet he used it only when he had to, regarding it as a valuable tool rather than a plaything. Goodly sums were also devoted to the needs of diplomacy: the subsidies, bribes, and pensions lavished by the king on all useful allies, and the salaries paid to the host of agents whom he dispatched all over Europe. That such expenditure was amply justified by its results has already been seen. And the growing burden of taxation was more than offset by the revived prosperity of the countryside. Thanks to the king's despotic government, France at large remained at peace. The destruction of the Burgundian power removed a constant incentive to feudal disorders within the kingdom. The subjection of the nobility, though cruel, proved a blessing to the other classes. The brigandage of discharged troops, which had once more grown to alarming proportions under Charles VII, was finally ended. Wise economic measures stimulated the repopulation of devastated regions and a noteworthy advance in commerce. The restored brilliance of French civilization in the following century was largely due to the tireless energy of the mean-looking but masterful Louis XI.

The recovery of France under Louis XI

Meanwhile events in England had pursued an opposite course. The Lancastrian dynasty, which had attained so glorious a height with the Peace of Troyes, ended amid the horrors of civil war and massacre. Henry VI grew up to be a virtuous, simple-minded man, utterly devoid of political ability. Under more favorable circumstances, ruinous consequences of the king's incompetence might have been avoided through the employment of wise ministers. But he was surrounded by ambitious courtiers who thought only of their own private interests. Among them the most prominent figures were the king's relatives—a prolific tribe claiming descent, either legitimate or illegitimate, from the chil-

The decline of England under Henry VI (1422-61)



dren of Edward III, and intermarried with practically every baronial house of England. Their quarrels over honors at court, their rivalries for office in church and state, their local feuds of one sort or another, came under the feeble administration of Henry VI to disturb the entire country. The turmoil was enhanced by the evil known as livery and maintenance—the employment by great nobles of armed retainers marked by some distinctive garb. Originating in the hiring of troops to serve in France, the practice was developed as a means of advancing family prestige at home, and it rapidly led to general lawlessness. Thereby the titled chief, like the present-day gangster, could terrorize a wide region, despoiling his rivals, intimidating courts and officials, and extorting blackmail to pay his expenses.

The outbreak of civil war and the Yorkist triumph

The middle of the century brought England an accumulation of troubles. The French conquered first Normandy and then Guienne. Political discontent fomented another uprising in Kent, Jack Cade's Rebellion, which was not put down until the capital had once more been subjected to pillage. The king, tainted by his descent from Charles VI, became intermittently insane and, as in France, this misfortune helped to precipitate a civil war. The leader of the anti-Lancastrian party was Richard, duke of York and, through his mother, heir of the earl of March whose rights had been passed over in 1399.<sup>13</sup> Should the principle of primogeniture be applied to the succession, he was legally king—and parliament, which had established the new dynasty, was now itself paralyzed by factional strife. At first York thought to secure power by the death or incapacity of Henry VI, but the birth of a son to the latter in 1453 precluded such a possibility. He thereupon raised the standard of revolt.

Although the war which thus began never involved more than small bands of noblemen with their retainers, it was a very sanguinary affair. Being fought in a violently feudist spirit, it produced a relatively enormous number of victims, either killed in battle or murdered in cold blood. Before it was over, the English aristocracy was very nearly exterminated. From the military point of view, its battles were insignificant, and their political results may be very briefly summarized. After winning several engagements, York was killed in 1460. But the cause of his son Edward was ably championed by the earl of Warwick, who in

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 621, and Table III.

the next year drove Henry VI into exile and had the Yorkist prince crowned as Edward IV. Then, when the new king proved ungrateful, Warwick changed sides, forced Edward to seek refuge with the duke of Burgundy, and in 1470 reinstated Henry VI—an action that won him the name of the King-Maker. Again his triumph was short-lived, for in 1471 the Yorkists, with Burgundian aid, gained two decisive battles, during or after which Warwick, Henry VI, his son, and the other prominent Lancastrians were all slain. For the remainder of his life Edward IV reigned unmolested.

In this dreary conflict the Yorkists were supported by Burgundy, the Lancastrians—a strange reversal of policy—by France. Obviously, therefore, Louis XI was disappointed by the triumph of Edward IV. Nevertheless, the failure of his diplomacy in England had no disastrous consequences. Although Edward, on the urging of Charles the Rash, invaded France in 1475, he quickly accepted a cash annuity and signed peace without having fought a battle. Meanwhile a Lancastrian fugitive named Henry Tudor had escaped to Brittany. His father was only a Welsh nobleman; his mother was descended from John of Gaunt, but through a son whose legitimacy had depended on an act of parliament. The fact that an adventurer of such dubious ancestry could be thought worthy of support shows the state of weakness to which the English kingdom had fallen. Shortly after the death of Edward IV in 1483, his two sons were murdered by their uncle and “protector,” who seized the crown as Richard III. This act of violence encouraged Tudor to advance his own claim to the throne. Leaving Brittany, he secured the aid of the French regent, Anne de Beaujeu, and with a small force landed in Wales (August, 1485). There he gained other recruits, and before the month had passed he was fortunate enough to win the battle of Bosworth Field, in which Richard III was slain.

The establishment of the Tudor dynasty

Parliament, as a matter of course, ratified the judgment obtained by force of arms, but Henry VII assured his title by other means. First he married Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV; next he carefully removed from the scene all other claimants. The result was the unchallenged supremacy of his dynasty. The fortunes of the illustrious Tudor house lie beyond the scope of the present study. Only one important fact in this connection may be briefly stated: under Henry VII the English monarchy became virtually absolute. A preliminary step toward

such a conclusion had already been taken. Since the Yorkists claimed the throne by strict hereditary right, their success in the civil war brought a sharp reaction away from the parliamentary system of the Lancastrians. Besides, for the same reasons as had proved effective in France, public opinion demanded a kingship powerful enough to restore and maintain order. The Tudors gave the country what it wanted. Parliament, it is true, did not disappear, but that was because for over a hundred years it served merely to register the royal will. Finding it a useful tool, the king preserved it. And through a process like that adopted by Louis XI, Henry VII subordinated the courts of common law to his own arbitrary justice administered through a branch of the royal council. As far as actual government was concerned, England thus became as thoroughgoing a despotism as France.

The foundation  
of the  
Spanish  
monarchy

The third of the great western monarchies at the close of the fifteenth century was Spain, a much more recent creation. In previous chapters we have seen how Aragon became an important state through union with Catalonia and the conquest of Moorish territory to the south. At the same time the kingdom of Castile, finally combined with León, had pushed its dominion to the Mediterranean at Murcia and to the Atlantic at Cadiz. The Mohammedan authority thus came to be restricted to the little territory of Granada. On the west coast Portugal maintained itself as an independent kingdom, and to the north Navarre came to be ruled by a series of French princes. This was the political situation at the end of the thirteenth century, and in general it continued unchanged for the better part of two hundred years. Throughout that period Castile was almost continuously disturbed by wars over the succession to the throne and played no part in European affairs. Aragon, on the other hand, remained the dominant power in the western Mediterranean, controlling, either directly or through branches of the royal family, the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, and Sicily. And in the early fifteenth century, the Aragonese added to these possessions the kingdom of Naples, successfully wrested from its Angevin claimant.

In the time of Louis XI both Castile and Aragon were once more torn by civil wars—a condition of affairs that was not at all displeasing to the French king. Thanks to it, he extorted the cession of two Catalonian provinces, Roussillon and Cerdagne, bringing his frontier to the crest of the Pyrenees. But he was taken by surprise in one respect. In 1468 a group of Castilian

rebels submitted on condition that Isabella, the sister of their unpopular king, be recognized as heiress to the crown, and in the following year she married Ferdinand, the prince apparent in Aragon. Accordingly, the two countries were brought into personal union in 1479, thenceforth to be inherited as the kingdom of Spain. Ferdinand, aided by his capable wife, quickly made himself the most powerful prince of the west. By conquering Granada and the southern half of Navarre, he extended his rule over the entire peninsula with the exception of Portugal. And eventually, by a series of measures similar to those of Charles VII, Louis XI, and Henry VII, he too was able to lay the foundations of an absolute monarchy. Such in bald outline were the events that ushered in an age of despots for Europe.

#### 4. THE CITIES AND THE NEW TRADE ROUTES

The fifteenth century brought a number of important political changes, the total effect of which was to give Europe a certain new aspect. Economically, however, there was no such conspicuous transformation. Although the opening of the New World was destined to have many revolutionary consequences, it was not itself the result of an economic revolution. Indeed, careful scrutiny of commercial, industrial, and agrarian conditions during the hundred years preceding the discovery of America fails to detect any prominent factors that had not been influential for a long time. The emancipation of the peasantry, for example, was a continuous process which had begun centuries before and which reached its culmination at different times in different countries. As far as the towns were concerned, the social unrest that characterized so many of them in the later Middle Ages was due to the persistence of old evils, rather than to the creation of new ones.

Economic  
conditions  
in the  
fifteenth  
century

One chronic source of trouble was the conflict in the greater industrial centers between the capitalist class of bankers, wholesalers, and other great merchants on the one side, and the artisan population on the other.<sup>14</sup> The typical gild system of the mediæval town was really suited only to a small business depending for its existence on the local market. In such an enterprise the employee had an opportunity of working his way to the top, whereas in one organized for export trade he had none. This

Capital-  
istic devel-  
opments

<sup>14</sup> See above, pp. 501 f., 565 f., 605 f.

situation, as we have seen, was the principal cause of many violent disturbances in the cities of Flanders and Italy; and as capitalistic undertakings on a large scale came to affect other regions, they also became the scene of a growing turbulence. So the application of Flemish methods to cloth-making in England tended to stimulate an irreconcilable antagonism between the clothiers, who invested their capital in raw wool, and the wage earners, who turned it into the finished product. In fact, from the fourteenth century on, a similar cleavage appeared in many of the greater crafts, splitting them horizontally into guilds of masters and guilds of journeymen. The labor problem was to find no solution in the mediæval period—or in that to come.

The  
decline  
of the  
Flemish  
communes

It is, of course, impossible to make absolute statements about hundreds of cities when each of them normally had a separate economic and political organization. It may be useful, however, to mention one or two outstanding facts with regard to particular regions. The northern Hansa, as has already been explained, reached its height of prosperity in the early fifteenth century. Its more important members enjoyed complete autonomy and, like other free cities of the Holy Roman Empire, had oligarchic constitutions, being governed by narrow groups of wealthy merchants. So they remained long after the Hansa had been dissolved. The Flemish communes, which for over three hundred years had been the economic leaders of western Europe, rapidly weakened in the fifteenth century, eventually to yield supremacy to newer centers, notably Antwerp and Brussels. This decline was due not so much to the Hundred Years' War, as to the gradual shifting of trade routes and the introduction of new industrial methods. In the making of cloth, especially, capitalists learned to place their looms with men who lived in the country and so to escape the tyrannical regulations of the guilds. The loss of that all-important business spelled ruin to Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres.

The  
English,  
French,  
and  
Spanish  
towns

Another factor that adversely affected the Flemish towns was the development of woollen manufacture in England, which came under the Tudors to absorb all local supplies of the raw material. Even before that, however, increasing quantities of wool had been diverted from Flanders by the Italian merchants. In the fourteenth century Venetian fleets had come to make annual voyages to London by way of Gibraltar and so to open direct trade with the British Isles, independent of the ancient market at Bruges. And gradually, under the influence of their example, English

merchants began to undertake greater expeditions on their own account. The French towns, meanwhile, had suffered tremendously from the prolonged evils of war and brigandage. But with the restoration of order under Louis XI, though deprived of their remaining self-government, they entered upon a new era of prosperity—especially the Atlantic ports and Lyons, which became the center of a flourishing silk industry. Except for Barcelona, none of the Spanish cities attained any great prominence in world trade until the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella opened before them a glorious prospect of wealth from the New World. Nor was the epoch-making character of the Portuguese voyages appreciated before the closing decades of the fifteenth century.

With the failure of the Holy Roman Empire, the disruption of the Sicilian kingdom, and the removal of the papacy to Avignon,<sup>15</sup> the history of Italy more than ever became that of the cities. The most striking phase of their development was the brilliant culture which will be sketched in the concluding chapter. Economically, they merely continued the vigorous life begun in the earlier age. Politically, they remained true to their ancient tradition of recognizing no authority except the sovereign will of each community. Aside from brief visits on the part of a few German kings and other misguided adventurers, northern Italy was free of foreign intervention during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Papal States had never had any real unity and they now ceased to be much more than a collection of autonomous city states and petty seignories. Naples and Sicily to some degree preserved the appearance of territorial kingdoms, but both were decadent. The leadership of Italy lay rather with the republics of Tuscany and the Po Valley.

The cities  
of Italy

To present even in brief outline the political history of the dozen greater states of Italy is here out of the question. With one or two notable exceptions, each of them was the scene of continuous strife, which resulted in a bewildering succession of factional overturns, popular insurrections, tyrannical usurpations, and the like. Most of this kaleidoscopic change affected only a few families. Wars were no longer carried on by the mass of the people, but by *condottieri*, mercenaries under professional captains like those who organized free companies for the cam-

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<sup>15</sup> See the following chapter.

paigns in France. Under such circumstances, the average citizen continued his normal life undisturbed by the feuds of the aristocracy. Besides, in many a city all effective power had been secured by some sort of despot, who ruled until he was overturned by a revolution or fell before the dagger of a conspirator. Such a ruler was sometimes a dictator set up by a form of election, sometimes the descendant of an imperial official, sometimes an adventurer who obtained power by sheer violence. Many of the tyrants, in spite of their cruelty and viciousness, gained fame as patrons of art and letters. Almost invariably they were thoroughly unscrupulous, resorting whenever necessary to chicanery and murder.

The  
Visconti  
at Milan  
and the  
Medici at  
Florence

For over a hundred years Milan was governed by the Visconti, who rose from comparative obscurity to be imperial vicars and then dukes, related by marriage to the royal houses of Germany, France, and England. Under their aggressive rule, Milan became the head of a considerable state, extending north to Switzerland and the Tyrol and south across the Po to Parma. On the east, however, Milan was checked by the republic of Venice and in Tuscany by that of Florence. The latter, during the first part of the fourteenth century, remained under a constitution that encouraged almost constant disorder. The culmination was the seizure of power by the artisan population in 1378, but the excesses of the mob led to violent reaction and before long the city was turned over to the arbitrary control of a few wealthy families. For a time Florence enjoyed an administration both stable and successful. The Milanese were driven back and the republic itself secured undisputed sovereignty over the entire valley of the Arno. Then discontent was revived by the high-handed methods of the oligarchy and there was another outburst of rioting. The revolt, strangely enough, established the unofficial dictatorship of the richest man in town—the banker, Cosimo de' Medici (d. 1464). He held no office himself, merely controlling by extra-legal means the government under the old constitution. Yet his ascendancy was unquestioned and it passed, as if it had been an actual principality, to his son, Piero, and to his grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent (d. 1492), under whom Florentine culture reached its height of splendor.

Venice  
and Genoa

While Florence became the greatest industrial center of Italy, commercial supremacy was disputed between Venice and Genoa. The former, as we have seen, won a great maritime empire as the

result of the Fourth Crusade. This success the Genoese sought to undo by helping to reinstate Greek rule at Constantinople; and for a time, by controlling the straits, they were able to assert a monopoly of trade on the Black Sea. But the restored government was unstable and the Venetians took advantage of recurrent civil wars to contest the position won by their rivals. On the other hand, the Genoese constantly tried to break the Venetian hold on the markets of Syria and Egypt. Until the second half of the fourteenth century the two republics remained fairly well balanced in strength. Then, in the last of their furious wars, Venice, faced by desperate odds, captured a besieging fleet by a heroic counter-attack and so obtained an advantageous peace in 1381. Although both cities were utterly exhausted by the conflict, it was only Venice that recovered. Genoa, abandoning the race for commercial supremacy in the Levant, became a vassal state first of France and then of Milan.

Venice, too, was threatened by the imperialistic designs of the Visconti. During the recent war Genoese allies had endangered the republic by cutting its communications across the Alps. To prevent a recurrence of this danger, the Venetians themselves adopted a policy of territorial expansion. Employing mercenary troops, they drove the Milanese out of the Adige Valley and eventually pushed their conquests as far west as Brescia and Bergamo. By the middle of the fifteenth century, the Adriatic republic had not only assured its dominance on the eastern Mediterranean, but also established itself as a continental power strong enough to rival the duchy of Milan. Even more surprising was the fact that through all the crises of the previous hundred years the Venetian government had continued to function smoothly and efficiently. The Venetians never invoked aid from a foreign prince; they never permitted a despot to assume charge of their city; after the closing of the great council,<sup>16</sup> they made no radical changes in their constitution. It was this political stability that gave Venice its greatest advantage over Genoa, which was almost as turbulent as Florence. To the student of political science the Venetian republic affords a classic example of oligarchy in its purest and most effective form.

The  
height of  
Venetian  
power

The arrival of the Turks in Europe did not cause the Venetians to forsake their ancient policy, that of fighting the Moslem only

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 545.



when it suited their commercial interests to do so. Even the Turkish capture of Constantinople failed to inspire them with crusading ardor, for by treaty with the sultan they still kept their position in the Levant. Nevertheless, the advance of the Ottoman forces on the Adriatic coast, in continental Greece, and into the adjacent islands inevitably led to war. The Venetians fared badly. Sixteen years of hostilities (1463-79) resulted in the loss of their Ægean possessions, and although they retained their trading rights at Constantinople, the days of their maritime supremacy were past. The decay which now set in was not, of course, due solely or even primarily to the new Mohammedan conquests. By the end of the fifteenth century all Italy came to be affected by the opening of Atlantic routes, which took away from the Mediterranean its status as a necessary link between the eastern and the western worlds. To explain how this change came about entails a brief review of various facts already indicated in previous chapters.

The commercial  
sphere of  
the Arabs

Since the establishment of the Arab Empire, somewhat over seven centuries had elapsed. This period may be said, from the commercial viewpoint, to fall into two clearly marked divisions. During the first half of it the Moslems enjoyed a virtual monopoly of trade throughout central and western Asia, northern Africa, and the adjoining waters. Then, in the eleventh century, the Italian cities launched a successful offensive on the sea. In cooperation with Christian hosts in Spain, Sicily, and Syria, they drove the Saracens back and gained undisputed control of the Mediterranean. Thenceforth the products of the orient were normally carried from the cities of Egypt, Syria, and the Black Sea by Italian merchants, to the enormous profit of their home towns. To the eastward, however, the Arabs still maintained their ancient supremacy. It was they who led the great caravans across the Asiatic plateau to supply the markets of the Levant. It was their fleets which linked by trade the coasts of India, Persia, Arabia, east Africa, and Egypt. Their mariners constantly sailed as far to the northeast as China and Japan, and as far to the southwest as Zanzibar. So, about the middle of the twelfth century, Roger II's Arabic geographer, Idrisi,<sup>17</sup> marked these regions on his map, together with the land of Ghana (Guinea) on the western shore of Africa.

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 394.

Such, in general, remained the extent of geographic knowledge down to the opening of the fifteenth century. Various Christians had crossed Asia—a journey made famous by the writings of the Venetian traveler, Marco Polo<sup>18</sup>—and its outline was fairly well known. On the other hand, all Africa, except the extreme north, was only a matter of hearsay to Europeans. Idrisi's map had given a distorted idea of the southern continent, offering no possibility of circumnavigation; but he had shown a westward-flowing river, presumably the Senegal, which had a common source with the Nile. This tradition, backed by various legends about a Christian country in the interior, really Abyssinia, might lead speculative westerners to believe that a way could be found to open direct contact with the Indies. But which of the seafaring nations would undertake the hazardous project? The Italians had every reason to leave conditions as they were. The Germans were mainly concerned with expansion in the Baltic. The Scandinavians, despite their discovery of Vineland,<sup>19</sup> had long since abandoned exploring activity. The French and the English were engaged in paralyzing warfare. Aragon was a Mediterranean power, devoted to ambitions which had been inherited along with Sicily. Castile was suffering from chronic anarchy. Portugal alone had the westward outlook and the freedom from other preoccupations to encourage an interest in African voyages.

The geographic significance of Africa

This little state, however, could not be expected to undertake any very grandiose enterprises. In the early fifteenth century the Portuguese dreamed neither of a New World nor of a direct route to India. These were accidental discoveries led to by plans of very modest scope. Prince Henry, third son of the king, held two important offices: the headship of the Order of Jesus, which had fallen heir to the local possessions of the Templars, and the governorship of Ceuta, a small Portuguese conquest across the strait from Gibraltar. In the former capacity he hoped that his crusaders, like the Teutonic Knights, might win new lands and peoples for Christianity. In the latter he sought to break into the remunerative slave trade carried on by the Moorish chieftains. These two motives combined to induce Prince Henry to send a series of expeditions down the African coast in search of the fabled Ghana and its marvelous river. After occupying

Portuguese exploration under Prince Henry (d. 1460)

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 578.

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 282.

the Azores, the Canaries, and Madeira—most of which had been discovered earlier—his mariners gradually crept past the inhospitable shore of the Saraha and actually reached the Promised Land to the south. Thence came shiploads of Negro captives to be Christianized—and sold at a huge profit. Thence too came precious cargoes of gold dust, ivory, and other tropical products. Even before Prince Henry's death in 1460, the Portuguese had forgotten the sacred crusade for the sake of commercial enterprise on a grand scale.

The circumnavigation of Africa and the discovery of America

The familiar story of the ensuing adventures forms no part of the present narrative. Once started on the road to discovery, the Portuguese made astounding progress. In 1482 Diego Cam found the mouth of the Congo. A few years later Bartolomeo Diaz rounded the Cape and proved that the opening of a direct sea route to the Indies was quite within the realm of possibility. Finally, in 1498, Vasco da Gama brought his country undying fame by completing a voyage to Calicut and back again. But this success had already been anticipated by Ferdinand of Aragon, who—without such great hesitation as legend has attributed to him—financed the undertaking of one Christopher Columbus. Daring as he was in sailing straight west into the unknown, Columbus launched no revolutionary theory by doing so. The sphericity of the earth had been taught in all western schools at least since the intellectual revival of the twelfth century and had, of course, been believed by educated Moslems for centuries earlier. Even more than the circumnavigation of Africa, the discovery of America was due to the application of mediæval science.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE DECLINE OF THE CHURCH

#### I. THE AVIGNON PAPACY

CLEMENT V was the first of six French popes who maintained their residence at Avignon.<sup>1</sup> Good reasons could no doubt be advanced to justify their continued absence from Italy, such as the necessity of ending the Hundred Years' War for the sake of a new crusade against the Turks. More compelling, however, was a less idealistic consideration: life was pleasanter on the banks of the Rhone than on those of the Tiber. Rome and the adjacent countryside had long been in a state of disorder, which was now aggravated through intervention first by Emperor Henry VII and then by Louis of Bavaria.<sup>2</sup> Despite all the efforts of Boniface VIII, the Angevins had never recovered Sicily, and the kingdom of Naples rapidly weakened as the abler members of the house transferred their energies to Hungary.<sup>3</sup> Avignon, on the other hand, was a relatively tranquil spot, immune from foreign invasion; and after its purchase in 1348, it became papal territory. Meanwhile an older episcopal residence had been converted into the great fortified palace that remains one of the most impressive monuments in southern France. There the popes lived in magnificent state, surrounded by their cardinals, each of whom maintained a princely establishment of his own.

The  
"Babylonian Captivity"  
of the  
papacy  
(1309-76)

Unfortunately for the papal cause, the convenience and security of Avignon as the capital of western Christendom was more than counterbalanced by the fact that, to remain there, the popes had to absent themselves from their proper see. The very essence of their authority was the Roman episcopate; separation from the Petrine city, except in case of absolute necessity, could be no less than a grave scandal in the eyes of the devout. It was not merely that the pope's absence brought chaos to his temporal possessions and injured his prestige among the congregations under his direct authority. To Europe at large the papacy tended to lose its international character as it sank to the position of a French

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 573.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 590.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 593.

dependency. Avignon, to be sure, was not in France, but it was encircled by Capetian lands. And although the popes were never entirely subservient to the king, it was only too apparent that, beginning with Clement V, they were careful not to incur his displeasure. The age was one of widespread disorder and unrest, which the rulers of the church did little to abate. Indeed, some of their acts were well calculated to increase the general discontent. The period of residence at Avignon has been called, not without justification, the "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy.

The  
character  
of the  
French  
popes

Personally, the Avignon popes were by no means inferior to the average of their predecessors. They remained devoted to such traditional ideals as the promotion of peace among Christians, the organization of united resistance to the Moslems, missionary work among the heathen, and the suppression of heresy. They were, however, more successful as administrators, establishing many reforms to increase the efficiency of the central government and to improve its financial resources. Some of them were really distinguished jurists. Important sections of the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*<sup>4</sup> were contributed by Clement V and his immediate successors. These labors, admirable as they were, could not make up for the failure of spiritual leadership bewailed by a growing multitude of the faithful. It was no new complaint that the papal court was mercenary and corrupt. The charge was now given enhanced force by the unprecedented luxury of the pope's establishment at Avignon, the mounting cost of his government, and the multiplication of his demands for money. In these respects, of course, the papal monarchy was merely developing ambitions common to all the great states of the age. That was the trouble. If the papacy were not to be different from its secular rivals, it could hardly be immune from attack.

With the passage of years, evidence of increasing opposition to the organized church rapidly accumulated. It became more and more difficult for the popes to enforce their discipline and to collect the revenues to which they laid claim. In England, where the French sympathies of the papacy were especially resented, parliament showed its hostility by a series of formal enactments. The Statute of Provisors<sup>5</sup> forbade the filling of English benefices by the pope; the Statute of Præmunire restricted the carrying of appeals to the papal *curia*. In practice these acts

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 431.

<sup>5</sup> For the nature of papal provisions, see above, p. 557.

did not prove to be very formidable, since the king, who continued to seek favors at Avignon, found it to his advantage not to enforce them. A third measure was perhaps more significant. From the time of Edward I the annual tribute owed the pope by virtue of John's homage<sup>6</sup> had remained unpaid. When, in 1365, parliament was given a papal reminder to this effect, it denied all responsibility on the ground that, without the consent of the Lords and Commons, such an obligation could not lawfully be established. No event better illustrates the decline both of feudalism and of the papacy since the days of Innocent III.

Under such conditions, it was natural that Europe should be swept by a flood of anti-clerical writings which continued and amplified the attacks of satirists and reformers in the preceding period.<sup>7</sup> During the thirteenth century there had been many causes of discontent. Some had been revealed in academic arguments, some in the compositions of bourgeois poets, some in religious propaganda which occasionally developed into downright heresy. The latter tendency had been checked by reforming movements within the church and by a campaign of judicial process and terrorism against the avowed enemies of the faith. By the opening of the fourteenth century, Catharism had been stamped out in western Europe, but many Waldensian congregations still persisted in the more isolated regions of Italy, eastern France, and Germany. They were now joined in their agitation against the official church by other obscure groups, remnants of earlier sects or freshly organized societies. How Dante carried on the traditions of vernacular literature by voicing an eloquent protest against contemporary evils in church and state will be seen in the following chapter. In the present connection briefer notice may be given to a much less distinguished writer of the same age.

Anti-clerical writings

Pierre Dubois was famous neither in his own day nor in those to come, until in the nineteenth century his work was rediscovered and published as a mediæval curiosity. He was a lawyer at the court of Philip IV, belonging to the ministerial circle of which Nogaret was the most prominent member, and sharing its attitude toward questions of public interest. Dubois addressed various Latin pamphlets to the king, among them one entitled *On the Recovery of the Holy Land*. Nominally it deals with the crusade, but that theme merely serves to introduce the author's ideas

Pierre Dubois

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 411.

<sup>7</sup> See above, pp. 507 f.

as to how the world should be generally reformed. Crusading enterprise, he says, is prevented by chronic dissensions among the princes of Europe, both lay and ecclesiastical. Nothing can be expected of the clergy, for they, as a consequence of their wealth, are sunk in avarice, sloth, and general corruption. European wars can be ended only by force and there is only one prince strong enough to apply it, the king of France. Without waiting for further justification, he should undertake the sacred project of uniting Christendom and, to finance it, he must confiscate all ecclesiastical property. Dubois then proceeds to show how such funds should be used for the reconstitution of almost everything. Education, for example, should be taken over by the state and extended to both sexes. It should be made more practical by including the study of other languages besides Latin and of such technical subjects as agriculture, engineering, and pharmacy. Only under such conditions can the Holy Land be recovered!

John  
XXII  
and the  
Franciscan  
schism

The surprising feature of this little book is its realistic point of view. Dubois cared nothing for traditions of universal monarchy. He wrote in terms of contemporary Europe, justifying the rôle assigned to the French king by the actual authority which the latter already exercised. Fantastic as his suggestions were, Dubois shows that his world of practical politics was far removed from the world of theory that fascinated Boniface VIII. The ancient controversy between papacy and empire flared up again in the fourteenth century, but it remained largely a war of invective. Clement V exchanged violent words with the emperor Henry VII, who invaded Italy and died there in 1313. One was succeeded by John XXII, the other by Louis of Bavaria; and these two likewise became embroiled over more or less imaginary rights in the Holy Roman Empire. Louis was succeeded by Charles IV, who dropped all pretensions to sovereignty in Italy and so ended what had become a thoroughly tiresome affair.<sup>8</sup> The part played in it by Louis of Bavaria is worth mentioning only because it led him to champion another cause which had come into papal displeasure—that of the Franciscans.

In a previous chapter we saw how the Friars Minor came to live in convents, enjoy the use of extensive property, devote themselves to learning, and do much else that hardly squared with the ideals of their founder. The change of discipline was frankly

<sup>8</sup> See above, pp. 591 f.

recognized as necessary by the majority of Franciscans, upon whom the government of the order devolved. But a zealous minority, who became known as the Spiritual Franciscans, fiercely denounced all lax interpretation of the rule and insisted upon a life such as had been led by the primitive group of the saint's disciples. And among them were a number who preached and wrote against the wealth of the clergy in general, thus allying with the heretical or semi-heretical sects that had been engaged in the same campaign for many generations. With the decline of papal prestige, the Franciscan quarrel grew more violent and so came before the Council of Vienne called by Clement V. Although the majority party, or Conventuals, failed to secure the condemnation of the Spirituals as heretics, the latter were ordered to obey their superiors. This many of them refused to do, forming instead a separate organization styled the Fraticelli, whose extremist views were merely intensified by the ensuing persecution.

John XXII was not the sort of man to show any sympathy for such fanatics, but in his zeal against the Spirituals he adopted a measure that embroiled him with the whole order—his formal condemnation of the doctrine that neither Christ nor the disciples had owned anything. Belief in apostolic poverty was the cornerstone of the Franciscan tradition; to defend it, the general chapter of the order was for a time willing to defy the pope himself. Although the majority of the Franciscans eventually submitted, the head of the order and a number of his ablest associates were driven to take refuge with Louis of Bavaria. Among them was William of Ockham, the most distinguished scholastic of the day.<sup>9</sup> This English Franciscan, a famous master of theology at Paris, was already suspect because of his bold attack on the teachings of Aquinas. Now, at the imperial court, he devoted his dialectical skill to the writing of weighty volumes against John XXII in particular and against the papal claims in general. The pope, said Ockham, has no authority at all in temporal affairs; even in matters of faith his decision is not absolute, for against him there must always be an appeal to Scripture as interpreted by wise and honest men. Thus the Franciscans fell back upon the defense which had been raised by Peter Waldo a hundred and fifty years earlier, and which in the future was to provide a refuge for Lollards, Hussites, and Protestants.

William of  
Ockham  
(d. 1349)

<sup>9</sup> See below, p. 711.



John of  
Jandun  
and  
Marsiglio  
of Padua  
(d. 1342)

Meanwhile Ockham had been joined by two other Parisian masters, John of Jandun and Marsiglio of Padua. The former was a Frenchman, especially devoted to the study of Aristotle and Averroës; the latter was an Italian, of whose early life little is known except that at Paris he had risen to be rector by 1313. There both became noted as anti-papalists, and so were eventually employed by Louis of Bavaria. They owed their reputation to a very remarkable book, called *Defensor Pacis* (Defender of Peace). Unlike the writings of Ockham, this work is not a typically scholastic composition. Its theme is not disguised under a series of "sentences," each elaborately argued pro and con. Instead, its discussion is clear and straightforward, easily followed by the modern student, once it is translated from the original Latin of the text. The *Defensor Pacis* is divided into three books, of which the first considers the nature of the state, the second deals with the church, and the third presents a brief conclusion. Book I, perhaps contributed by John of Jandun, is drawn mainly from Aristotle's *Politics* and develops the thesis that monarchy is essentially a delegation of power from the people, or that better part of them which is the source of supreme law. Although this introductory section marks a noteworthy advance in political thought, it is rather by virtue of the second book that Marsiglio ranks as one of Europe's great original thinkers.

The  
conciliar  
theory  
of the  
*Defensor  
Pacis*

Here the author states that the church is really the body of believing Christians. Within the congregation of the faithful the clergy act as experts for the determination of purely ecclesiastical questions, but they have no coercive authority—no power to assess temporal penalties. God alone may punish violations of divine law. Nor can the clergy have any just title to worldly goods; their single function is to save souls by preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments. As far as the pope is concerned, he is merely the head of the clergy, installed by them for their own convenience. His alleged plenitude of power is sheer usurpation and must be undone before there can be any peace in Europe. Sovereign authority within the church rightfully lies with the community of Christian citizens; as their representative, a general council of Christendom not only can but must carry through a sweeping ecclesiastical reform. There will be no lasting relief for a troubled world until the church has been purified of abuses and its practice made to accord with the principles of its divine constitution.

This, obviously, was a revolutionary doctrine. Whatever its logical or historical justification, it could not be applied in the fourteenth century without a radical change of ecclesiastical organization. For the papal absolutism of the preceding centuries Marsiglio proposed the substitution of a limited monarchy, in which ultimate power would rest with the congregation of Christians, or with whatever assembly might act as their collective spokesman. Thus formulated as a matter of academic discussion, the conciliar theory of church government was soon to be made a practical issue of supreme interest to all of Europe.

## 2. THE GREAT SCHISM AND THE NEW HERESIES

Bad as the condition of the church seemed in the earlier half of the fourteenth century, it became infinitely worse in the latter half. Since the establishment of the papal residence at Avignon, there had been constant talk of a return to Rome. Yet none of the French popes actually crossed the Alps until 1367, and then Urban V, disillusioned by the turbulence of Italy, made only a short visit, returning to die at Avignon in 1370. It was thus left for his successor, Gregory XI, to resume the project in 1377. He also, as a Frenchman in a foreign land, found a very troubled situation at Rome, and died in the next year oppressed by grave fears for the future. Immediately the Roman populace began a violent agitation to secure an Italian pope. The cardinals, foolishly neglecting to assure their independence of action, held an election while indirectly menaced by a crowd assembled outside the Vatican. Of the sixteen men on whom the choice devolved, twelve were French. Had they been voting in Avignon, they would hardly have named an Italian. In Rome, just before an angry mob broke in upon them, they proclaimed the archbishop of Bari, and he was solemnly enthroned as Urban VI (April 9, 1378).

The papal  
return to  
Rome

Almost at once the cardinals repented their action. Antagonized by the treatment which they received from the new pope, thirteen of them deserted Rome on August 9 and went to Anagni, where they were eventually joined by the other three. Meanwhile Charles V of France had been notified of their doubts with regard to the earlier proceedings and he, despite his previous recognition of Urban, encouraged them to go ahead with their plan. Accordingly, they declared the election void on account of intimidation and elevated the bishop of Geneva as Pope Clement VII. To this

The  
double  
election  
of 1378

Urban replied by excommunicating all the old cardinals and appointing nineteen new ones. Clement likewise placed his opponents under anathema and the Great Schism had begun. A disputed papal election was no novelty; on many occasions Italy had witnessed the spectacle of rival popes exchanging curses and even engaging in open warfare. But such quarrels had soon worn themselves out, ending with the abdication or death of one or the other contestant. Now, on the other hand, the forces were so evenly balanced that their conflict threatened to persist indefinitely.

It has been argued that the schism was based on sincere disagreement with regard to the merits of a difficult case. Weighty arguments were indeed advanced on both sides of the dispute; yet the dominance of political factors seems too obvious to be denied. The fundamental cause of trouble was unquestionably the antagonism between the French cardinals and the Roman populace—neither party conspicuous for its altruism. Italian opinion quite naturally favored the latter, and it was no mere coincidence that the French king sympathized with the former. Clement inevitably failed to obtain general recognition in Italy, and so he established his court at Avignon. An assembly of the French clergy gave him their allegiance, and the University of Paris, under royal pressure, grudgingly did so too. The English, of course, declared for Urban, as did the continental states within their sphere of influence, such as Portugal and Flanders. For the same reason, Scotland supported Clement, and so eventually did Navarre, Castile, and Aragon. Most of eastern, central, and northern Europe followed the emperor Charles IV in pronouncing for the Roman pope. A number of German princes, however, asserted their independence by taking the opposite side.

Chaotic  
conditions  
in Europe

To make matters worse, neither of the popes was a man of such outstanding character that he could end the deadlock by personal influence. Urban VI, apart from the cause that he embodied, would have had few friends, and Clement VII was from the outset helpless except as the protégé of Charles V. After the death of that great king in 1380, the Avignon papacy found itself in a very dubious situation, but the Roman papacy utterly lacked the capacity to profit by it. Indeed, by the closing decades of the century, all Europe seemed to be suffering from political paralysis. In France the weak rule of Charles VI was encouraging the outbreak of civil war. England, recovering from the Great Revolt

of 1381, was plunged into fresh disorder by the misgovernment of Richard II. Germany, since the accession of Wenceslas, had reverted to a state of chaos. In Italy there was war between the Visconti and their neighbors, between factions at Florence, between rival dynasties for the thrones of Naples and Sicily, and—bitterest of all—between Venice and Genoa. The whole eastern frontier was disturbed by the conflicts of Germans, Poles, Lithuanians, Czechs, and Hungarians, while the Ottoman Turks, taking advantage of the prevalent anarchy among the Christians, were steadily completing their conquest of the Balkans.

Under such conditions, it was natural that the leadership of the distracted church should be assumed by the University of Paris, an international organization which for three centuries had wielded a sort of intellectual dictatorship in western Europe. Such a move became the more urgent because the death of Urban VI in 1389 had led merely to the installation of Boniface IX at Rome, and because Clement VII was too old to live much longer. The university had never been more than half-hearted in his support and the French people had long since found the maintenance of a separate papacy a very expensive luxury. The passing of the original contestants should offer an excellent opportunity for the healing of the schism. So in 1395 the doctors of Paris presented the royal government and the world at large with a definite program of action. The efforts of Christians should be directed, first, toward securing the abdication of both popes in favor of a single candidate to be agreed on by their respective followers; secondly, toward a settlement to be arranged by arbitration between the two rivals; and as a final resort, toward the calling of a general council.

Proposals  
for healing  
the schism

At last Clement VII died in 1394. His cardinals were unwilling to tolerate a prolonged vacancy, but they did elect a man pledged to abdicate whenever the occasion should arise—a Spanish prelate who took the name of Benedict XIII. Then ensued several years of diplomatic effort, in the course of which the university, the king of France, and various other princes vainly sought to obtain a joint abdication on the part of the popes. Benedict, in particular, refused all cooperation. Ignoring his solemn pledge, he displayed such obstinacy in the face of all argument that he soon antagonized the majority of his own partisans. It was in this connection that the archbishop of Reims was led to remark that Spain had always been famous for its mules! Shar-

The  
French  
Subtrac-  
tion of  
Obedience  
(1398)

ing the same conviction, the French government decided, instead of moral suasion, to apply force. Accordingly, in 1398, an assembly of clergy was induced to vote "subtraction of obedience" from the pope. This was a revolutionary act, for it was based on the principle that the clergy of one state constituted an autonomous unit—a national church, which could grant or withhold allegiance at pleasure. It marked the emergence in France of a new concept that was to gain increasing prominence in the subsequent age, that of the Gallican Liberties.

The papal  
comedy of  
1407-08

The practical effect of the measure in 1398 was of course to take from Benedict the bulk of his revenue. Temporarily his cause seemed lost and he was deserted by most of his cardinals. Then, unfortunately, the matter was drawn into the feud between Orléans and Burgundy, the former opposing and the latter favoring the subtraction. Thus, as the civil war broke out in France, the situation in the church became worse than ever. Benedict, encouraged by the paralysis of the monarchy and by the return of his cardinals, maintained his stubborn attitude without the slightest change. In 1406, however, fresh hope arose. A renewed vacancy at Rome permitted the election of Gregory XII on condition that he would take steps to end the schism by holding a personal conference with his rival. Indeed, both popes agreed to an interview, and in the autumn of 1407 both actually started toward a common destination. But as they drew together, their pace became slower and slower. Under enormous pressure, Gregory progressed to Lucca while Benedict, on board ship, finally sailed as far as the southern boundary of the Genoese territory. There, within a few miles of each other, they stayed, one refusing to go on water and the other refusing to go on land, until in April, 1408, the farce was ended by their return to their respective homes.

The  
Council  
of Pisa  
(1409)

This was the last straw. A majority of the cardinals from the two camps now made common cause and, in defiance of the papal authority, summoned a general council to meet at Pisa in the following year. Although it lacked hearty support in various countries and although both popes called opposition assemblies, the Council of Pisa boldly proceeded to carry out drastic measures. Benedict and Gregory were cited to appear before it, and when they refused, both were declared guilty of heresy and deposed from office. To fill the vacancy thus created, the united college of cardinals elected a new pope, first the short-lived Alex-

ander V, and then John XXIII. The latter was a Neapolitan, better known as a commander of *condottieri* than as a healer of souls. He proved unable to dispose of either Gregory or Benedict. The net result of the council's activity was consequently the addition of a third pope. Such an intolerable situation, however, had one beneficent effect: it united all western Christendom in support of a new council summoned to Constance by John XXIII in cooperation with the emperor Sigismund.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, the church was threatened by the alarming growth of a heresy which had arisen in England and developed in Bohemia. Of John Wycliffe's early life almost nothing positive is known. He seems to have been of a Yorkshire family. He assuredly was educated at Oxford and by the second half of the fourteenth century he had there become a distinguished master. At some time previously he had been ordained priest and, like many of his colleagues, he maintained himself at the university by holding a parish in the country. He even secured, by papal provision, two canonries in cathedral chapters, which increased his income without entailing any work in either place. In other words, Wycliffe first appears as a well-to-do Oxford professor, whose scruples excluded neither the acceptance of favors from the pope nor the holding of several ecclesiastical jobs at the same time. As to the dominant influences upon his mental development, we are reduced to surmises. For over a century Oxford had been a center of Franciscan scholarship. Within the last fifty years William of Ockham had been a master there. It is incredible that Wycliffe was not influenced by his works and by those of his associates.

John  
Wycliffe  
(d. 1384)

At any rate, when Wycliffe himself came to publish books, they for a time merely repeated arguments that had already become familiar through the writings of Franciscan controversialists. So his Latin essays on lordship (*dominium*) defended the thesis that civil and ecclesiastical authority are both from God; that each depends for its validity on reciprocal service; and that, accordingly, no unworthy official, lay or clerical, can rightfully assert a divine title. In particular, he held that the state would be justified in confiscating whatever property of the church was not conducive to religious ends. These were purely academic compositions, couched in the involved language of the schools

Early  
works

<sup>10</sup> See above, pp. 593 f.

and therefore incomprehensible except to the highly educated. They undoubtedly reflected the teachings which had already gained Wycliffe fame at the university, and which had already appeared dangerous to certain authorities. In 1377 Pope Gregory XI condemned as erroneous eighteen of Wycliffe's published opinions, affirming that they were reminiscent of those earlier expressed by Marsiglio "of damned memory."

Later  
works

In the meantime, just at the accession of Richard II, Wycliffe had attracted the attention of the royal government. As a professorial expert who favored the raising of money at the expense of the church, his political career was brief and indecisive; yet it sufficed to win him friends at court, including John of Gaunt. This alliance, coinciding with the establishment of the Great Schism, explains why Wycliffe escaped all prosecution before the ecclesiastical authorities and for a while even retained his position in the university. But the growing disrepute of the papacy, together with the sympathy which Wycliffe encountered on every side, led him to become more and more of an avowed rebel. He developed radical opinions concerning the sacrament of the eucharist, the Petrine supremacy, and other Catholic doctrines. Soon he had lost the support of the more conservative doctors at Oxford and of the Franciscans generally. In 1382 an assembly of English clergy, summoned by a new and vigorous archbishop of Canterbury, declared heretical ten of his more recent conclusions. Expelled from the university, he retired to his parish at Lutterworth and there died in 1384. Although his books had been condemned, he had been immune from all personal molestation.

The  
Lollards

Until his later years Wycliffe remained essentially a scholar. All his important works were in Latin and few of them presented ideas in any but the conventional language of the schoolmen. Accordingly, they are filled with such fine-drawn distinctions that it is often hard to determine the author's exact position. Some points, however, are certain. He repudiated the papal headship as a corruption of the primitive church. Without excluding all miraculous quality from the celebration of the mass, he denied transubstantiation as it had been defined since the days of Innocent III. And after his writings had been formally condemned as heretical, he naturally tended to press his arguments to increasingly radical conclusions. He came, like the Waldensians, to emphasize the saving power of Christ quite independent of priestly

mediation, and the authority of Holy Scripture in preference to that of the organized church. Through force of circumstances, he at the same time shifted his appeal from men in power to the ordinary folk of town and country, preaching in the vernacular, supervising an English translation of the Bible, and inspiring disciples to adopt a life of poverty among the people for the sake of reform agitation.

Wycliffe's followers, who came to be known as Lollards, increased rapidly during the troubled years that closed the fourteenth century. That their attack upon various evils in the existing church was justified is proved by many contemporary writers, including the illustrious Chaucer and Langland. Wycliffe was by no means alone in his denunciation of luxurious prelates, degenerate monks, hypocritical friars, dishonest peddlars of indulgences,<sup>11</sup> and the like. Personally he never turned his doctrines to justify political or social uprising, but some of his popular preachers may have done so. There were, we know, rebellious clergymen who encouraged the insurrection of 1381. The Lollards, in any case, remained virtually unmolested until the close of the fourteenth century. Then Henry IV, anxious to obtain ecclesiastical recognition of his title to the throne, gave warm support to the orthodox cause. An act of parliament established, for the first time in England, the penalty of burning for heresy. And after a rising of the Lollard gentry had been suppressed, the law was rigorously enforced against the remnants of the sect. By the second quarter of the fifteenth century, at least the public avowal of Wycliffite doctrines had disappeared.

Meanwhile, by a strange turn of events, these doctrines had become widely prevalent in Bohemia. There, even more than in England, men had been prepared for the reception of heterodox views by the preaching of Waldensians and other radicals during the previous two hundred years. Besides, in so far as the Roman church in Bohemia was identified with German domination, it was liable to resistance on the part of the Czechs. Charles IV had somewhat allayed the hostility of the national party to his dynasty by a wise and liberal administration,<sup>12</sup> under the boorish Wenceslas, however, trouble flared up again. One center of dis-

Religious  
conditions  
in  
Bohemia

<sup>11</sup> The indulgence was supposed to be, not a forgiveness of sin, but a remission of penance, canceling, in whole or in part, a repentant sinner's term in purgatory. See above, pp. 170, 333; below, pp. 670, 699, 703.

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 593.



turbance was the University of Prague, where the Czechs complained that the Germans enjoyed authority out of all proportion to their numbers. Finally, having lost the German crown by a revolution, the king sought to ingratiate himself with the Czechs by turning the university over to their control. Most of the German masters and students eventually deserted Prague for other centers of learning, but the academic quarrel remained acute for a number of years at the opening of the fifteenth century.

The rise of  
John Hus was John Hus, a preacher in the native tongue at one of the local chapels. Although he had displayed ability as a student of theology, his chief interest lay in practical religion. Already convinced that the church stood in great need of reform, he was now to become acquainted with the writings of Wycliffe. Since the marriage of Richard II to a sister of Wenceslas, various young Bohemians had studied at Oxford, and among them was Jerome of Prague, who in 1401 brought back with him certain of the famous Englishman's later works. Hus, while hesitating over Wycliffe's extreme conclusions on points of doctrine, accepted the Lollard reform in general and ardently devoted his energies to its furtherance. His success was tremendous, for he was a man of great force and personal charm. Besides, he was the more enthusiastically received by the Czechs because he was at once opposed by the Germans. Nor was the movement restricted to the educated class. Preached among the common people by a host of volunteers, the Hussite beliefs made rapid headway throughout the countryside, and there the agitation soon developed heretical tendencies.

Hus, like Wycliffe, inevitably became embroiled with the higher clergy; it was only a matter of time until he should come into conflict with the royal government. King Wenceslas, after trying to remain neutral in the schism, gave his support to the Council of Pisa and its pope, John XXIII. The latter, to raise money for a "crusade" against his enemies, followed the usual practice of issuing special indulgences to any who would contribute to the sacred cause. The king naturally gave the enterprise his blessing, but Hus, true to his Wycliffite principles, and in defiance of all commands to the contrary, boldly denounced it. And when he was threatened by the pope with excommunication, he appealed to Scripture as the basis of all Christian judgment. Meanwhile the impetuous Jerome of Prague led a tumultuous crowd to burn the offending bulls in the public square of the capital. Within a

year the Bohemian situation was completely out of hand; even if the king had been able to formulate a consistent program, he would have been powerless to carry it out. So the Hussite question became one of the major difficulties to be faced by the Council of Constance.

### 3. THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE AND THE FAILURE OF REFORM

The Council of Pisa had of course acted upon the principle that it held authority superior to that of a pope, but the rightfulness of its claim had remained somewhat dubious. Now, in 1414, such doubts were swept aside and western Christendom united in recognizing the sovereignty of its representative assembly. Although the triumph of the conciliar theory was primarily due to the actual course of events, the intellectual leadership of the University of Paris was also a potent factor, and in this respect its great spokesmen were two famous theologians, Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson. The former was the abler politician; the latter the more profound scholar. Thus, while d'Ailly deserted the Parisian party to accept high honor under Benedict XIII, Gerson continued to produce a stream of writings to justify the calling of a general council, with or without the papal consent. In 1408 d'Ailly abandoned the cause of Benedict and came to take an active part along with Gerson in the Council of Pisa. At Constance, too, they were to stand shoulder to shoulder.

Pierre  
d'Ailly  
and Jean  
Gerson

Having met in the autumn of 1414, the new council did not formally organize until January of the next year. Normally, in such assemblies, only the prelates had been permitted to vote. Now, on the proposal of the Parisian spokesmen, it was agreed to extend the privilege to all doctors of theology or law, and furthermore to divide the council into four nations:<sup>13</sup> Italian, French, German, and English. The former measure assured the dominance of the reforming party; the latter prevented the exercise of undue influence by the Italian clergy, for they could be outvoted by the other three nations. Chief among the persons displeased by this action was John XXIII, who had summoned the council in the expectation that it would support him against Gregory XII and Benedict XIII. On the contrary, since neither Sigismund nor the French leaders cared to take so unpopular a stand, he was treated as merely one of three rivals. So, in March,

The end  
of the  
schism

<sup>13</sup> On their accession to the council, the Spanish were subsequently constituted as a fifth nation.

the pope denounced the whole proceeding and left the city. His flight, instead of paralyzing the council, actually facilitated its program. Declaring its supreme authority under the direct inspiration of God, it annulled all decrees that the pope might issue and menaced him with deposition if he did not at once submit. In May the threat was carried out and John, by that time a prisoner in the hands of the emperor, formally accepted the judgment. Next Gregory XII, to avoid a less dignified fate, wisely decided to resign. There remained only the obstinate Benedict XIII. Up to this point he had enjoyed the support of Castile and Aragon, but before the end of the year they had been detached from his alliance. Although the aged Spaniard still refused to abdicate and continued until his death to launch anathemas against a hostile world, he was condemned afresh and thenceforth ignored.

The trial  
and death  
of John  
Hus (1415)

Meanwhile the council had taken up the case of John Hus, who had come to Constance under a safe-conduct signed by the emperor. There the disciple of Wycliffe found few sympathizers. Even the extreme champions of conciliar supremacy had no desire to break the traditions of the mediæval church; indeed, the very fact that they opposed the papal absolutism made them the more anxious to prove their orthodoxy in matters of faith. While a preliminary investigation was being held, Hus was seized and imprisoned. Sigismund protested, but was assured that a promise made to a heretic had no validity. In May, 1415, the council affirmed the earlier condemnation of Wycliffe by the English clergy, commanding his books to be burned and his bones to be cast out of consecrated soil. Finally, in June, Hus was arraigned for trial. Although he insisted that he did not deny transubstantiation, he freely admitted that in many points he believed Wycliffe to have been right. For saying that a king living in mortal sin was no king in God's sight, Sigismund abandoned him to his fate. The council thereupon drew up a list of thirty-nine articles taken from his writings and demanded that he abjure them. With absolute bravery, he refused until they could be shown contrary to Holy Scripture. Accordingly, he was adjudged an incorrigible heretic and burned just outside the city wall (July 6, 1415). Jerome of Prague followed him to the stake in the next year.

While demonstrating thorough conservatism as to Christian doctrine, the majority of the council continued to demand extensive reform in the sphere of ecclesiastical government. As to precisely what should be done, however, there was no unanimity.

The bishops, of course, wanted no revision of the episcopal system in general, and as soon as they proposed changes in the papal administration they encountered the bitter hostility of the cardinals. Even the question of future assemblies quickly became controversial. Should a general council be given permanent functions in connection with routine matters, or should the exercise of its powers be restricted to emergencies? And in such emergencies just what might it do? The year 1416 saw very little accomplished at Constance, for the ecclesiastical disputes were aggravated by the political conflicts of the nations—especially the civil war in France and Henry V's invasion of Normandy. In the meantime the church remained without a recognized head.

The problem of reform

By the autumn of 1417 a crisis had been reached. One party had demanded the immediate election of a pope; another had insisted on the adoption of reforms as a necessary preliminary to such action. But everybody was tiring of the long delay and in October a compromise was effected: the articles already agreed on among the nations should be enacted as a basis for subsequent legislation and the election should be held at once. Six decrees were accordingly promulgated, the more important of which concerned the holding of general councils in the future. The first should be called in five years, the second in seven years, and after that one every ten years, except in case of schism; then a council should meet even without being summoned. The sixth decree enumerated eighteen points concerning which the new pope should establish reforms in consultation with the council. All of them had to do with the rights and practices of the pope—such as his taxes and other revenues, his powers of appointment, appeals to his court, papal dispensations and indulgences, the cardinal college, and the offenses for which a pope might be brought to trial before a general council.

In the following month, after considerable dispute over procedure, twenty-three cardinals met with thirty deputies of the five nations and by unanimous vote elected a pope. Their choice fell on one of Gregory XII's cardinals, a member of the great Colonna family, who took the name of Martin V. In personal character he was above reproach, and his political skill was attested by the fact that he had made no violent enemies during the troubled years preceding. Being now the head of a reunited church, he inevitably took advantage of the council's growing fatigue to reassert the papal authority. One or two measures of no far-

The election of Martin V (1417)

reaching consequence were proposed by him to the entire assembly and there adopted. At the same time, however, he began discussion with the separate nations, which eventually agreed to a series of minor concessions as in part satisfying their demands. Accordingly, in April, 1418, the pope was able to pronounce the dissolution of the council on the ground that there was no longer any need of it. Whether, if the assembly had continued to sit for another year, anything further would have been accomplished may well be doubted. At any rate, the program of thorough reform that had occasioned so much talk seemed now to be forgotten, and people as of old turned for leadership to the all-powerful papacy.

The out-  
break of  
the Hus-  
site war

Meanwhile the council's Bohemian policy had also proved an utter failure. John Hus had never formulated a dogmatic system. He had refused to enter into theological discussion with Gerson and the other Catholic doctors. He had merely stated his belief that on many points of faith and discipline current practice was in obvious disagreement with the New Testament, to which he professed unswerving allegiance. The council, justifying its very existence by sacred tradition, could never admit the validity of an appeal to any other authority and quite logically condemned Hus as a heretic. But that was no way to pacify the Czechs. In their eyes Hus, a model of sincere piety and courageous devotion to the national interests, had been grossly betrayed to a martyr's death. Thus glorified, his cause became one for which thousands of his compatriots would readily die. As the hesitant Wenceslas finally succumbed to disease in 1419 and Sigismund claimed his crown, the whole country burst into violent insurrection. For seventeen years the Hussite war threatened to produce such a general conflagration as actually occurred in the following century.

Calixtines  
and  
Taborites

At the outset the Czechs were by no means united. Aside from the few who remained wholly loyal to the existing system, there were two main parties. The moderate Hussites, or Calixtines, demanded four reforms: full liberty of preaching the Gospel, communion in two kinds,<sup>14</sup> restoration of the apostolic life by abolishing the temporal power of the church, and strict enforcement of the canons against mortal sin. This group included most

<sup>14</sup> In the Roman mass the communicant received only the consecrated bread; not the wine as well. Those who demanded communion in both kinds were called Calixtines because they wanted to receive the cup (*calix*).

of the landed aristocracy and the upper bourgeoisie; the center of its strength lay in the University of Prague. Among the lower classes of town and country, however, it was the more radical doctrines of Wycliffe that had secured a firm hold through the missionary efforts of popular preachers. Merging imperceptibly into older congregations of Waldensians, they rejected all beliefs and practices which were not directly justified by Scripture. For example, they denounced the adoration of the Virgin and the saints, monasticism, all gorgeous ceremonial, and all sacraments except baptism and the eucharist. They denied the doctrine of transubstantiation and that of purgatory, together with the accompanying faith in indulgences. Under such a régime, the necessity of an ordained clergy tended to disappear; the priest became primarily a minister of the Gospel, leading a very simple life in the midst of his flock and setting them an example of the strict morality that we know as Puritanical.

As was soon to be demonstrated, there was wide disagreement among the more radical Hussites, but the strongest of their associations became known as Taborites, after a central village which they had renamed from the Bible. Between them and the Calixtines feeling was very bitter, but temporarily the two factions were given no chance to fight each other. In 1420 Martin V proclaimed a crusade against the Bohemian heretics, and the consequence was the enthusiastic union of the Czechs in national defense. The Catholic army was a nondescript aggregation of feudal levies and volunteers, directed by papal legates while Sigismund was occupied with a Turkish war. On their side, the Czechs had solid popular support and a thorough knowledge of the country. Besides, in John Zizka, a lesser noble associated with the Taborite organization, they found a general of outstanding military genius. He perfected a tactical system that ranks among the most effective of the age. In battle his infantry were placed behind movable bulwarks formed of heavy baggage wagons, some of which were defended by cannon. Thanks to his skillful use of such primitive field artillery and to the spirit of his troops, he was able to defeat three successive crusades (1420-22). Then ensued four years of devastating civil war, in the course of which Zizka died of the plague. Yet the Czechs were able to repulse a fourth invading host in 1427; and despite the return of the emperor and an attempted reform of the German army, a fifth expedition in 1431 met with the same disastrous fate.

The failure of the  
Hussite  
Crusades  
(1420-31)

Eugenius  
IV and the  
Council of  
Basel  
(1431)

It was this series of events, a discredit to empire and papacy alike, that produced a fresh crisis in the church and momentarily revived the old conciliar program. Following the decision made at Constance, Martin V had reluctantly summoned a general council at Pavia in 1423, but it was attended only by a few Italian prelates, who did nothing except to provide that the next assembly should be at Basel in 1431. When that time arrived, conditions were such that the pope was afraid to attempt evasion. Accordingly, the meeting was authorized and the statesmanlike Cardinal Cesarini was named as its presiding officer. Then suddenly Martin V died, and before the council had assembled, all Europe was thrown into excitement by the crushing defeat of the last Bohemian expedition. The consequence was a great influx of clergy into Basel while the administration of the church was being taken over by an untried man. The new pope, Eugenius IV, was a Venetian, who at once devoted his official authority to checking the aggressions of the Visconti at Milan<sup>15</sup> and to reducing the influence which the Colonna family had gained under his predecessor. While thus embroiling himself in Italian politics, he proceeded to invite revolution by antagonizing the council at Basel.

The paci-  
fication of  
Bohemia  
(1436)

There a great body of clergy, including an unusually large proportion from the lower ranks, had organized for business, adopting, instead of division into nations, a sort of committee system for preliminary discussion of measures. On the recommendation of Cesarini, himself just returned from the Bohemian war, the council invited the Hussites to send a deputation to talk over an amicable settlement. It was this scandalous application of common sense that led Eugenius, in December, 1431, to declare the assembly dissolved. Such precipitate action quite naturally brought the reply that no general council could be dissolved except by its own consent—and negotiations with the moderate Bohemian party were continued without interruption. By the end of 1433 the pope, driven from Rome by a coalition of his enemies, had decided to recognize the council, which then signed a compact with the Calixtines on the basis of their four articles. Although on three points the compromise was either vague or meaningless, communion in both kinds was specifically allowed and the moral victory clearly lay with the Czechs. The Taborites, of

<sup>15</sup> See above, p. 652.

course, refused to accept the agreement, but in 1434 their forces were annihilated by the strengthened party of the moderates. Two years later the Bohemian peace was made definitive by formal ratification and at last Sigismund, having sworn to support the new settlement, was admitted to Prague.

During this affair Pope Eugenius had played an inglorious part. He had been compelled to reverse his stand with regard to the Hussites and to recognize the acts of an assembly which he had thought to dissolve. Whatever the saving theories that might be presented by the legal-minded, the actual sovereign of the church had proved to be not the pope, but the council. It was logical, therefore, that the latter should now take up the project of general reform which had occasioned so much talk and so little action at Constance. In rapid succession decrees were promulgated to abolish annates,<sup>16</sup> to restrict papal appointments, to reconstitute the cardinal college, and to define the pledges that should be demanded of future popes. Yet, in proportion as the more radical element gained control of the assembly, the moderates, headed by Cesarini, tended to swing round to the support of the pope. The final pacification of Bohemia, by removing the menace of a general uprising in central Europe, brought to many a natural revulsion of feeling. Eugenius, once more the master of Rome, merely awaited a favorable opportunity to renew his defiance of the opposition. By 1438 matters had drifted to an open breach: the pope refused a summons to defend his conduct at Basel and called a rival council at Florence, where negotiations with the Byzantine emperor led in the next year to a momentary reunion of the Greek and Latin churches.

The papal triumph over the council (1437-49)

This triumph of papal diplomacy was short-lived, for the treaty failed of ratification at Constantinople. Nevertheless, the trend of events continued to favor the papal cause. In 1439 the fathers at Basel made the fatal mistake of setting up an anti-pope. A fresh schism was the last thing that Europe desired and thenceforth the credit of the council steadily declined. The moderates had already deserted, and though a dwindling shadow of the original body lasted on for another ten years, the conciliar movement had come to a miserable end. None of the temporal princes took any interest in the anti-pope. Eugenius, by giving his bless-

<sup>16</sup> A papal tax developed in the fourteenth century. The newly elected prelate had to pay to Rome the first year's income of his office.



ing to the Aragonese conquest of Naples,<sup>17</sup> broke down the remaining barrier to the acknowledgment of his authority throughout Italy. The Habsburg succession in Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary<sup>18</sup> led to the abandonment of the Basel decrees by the emperor. And at last, in 1449, the council formally dissolved, while its protégé resigned all claim to the papal dignity. Nicholas V, the successor of Eugenius, chose the year 1450 to celebrate the restoration of Christian peace by a great jubilee at Rome.

The relapse of the papacy

Almost at once, however, the Turkish conquest of Constantinople proved that the pope's dream of a Europe reunited against the infidel could not come true. Nor did his efforts in the cause of a spiritual revival within the church bring lasting improvement. Even the project of reforming the ecclesiastical administration soon lapsed. The decrees of Basel became a dead letter, except as they were enforced by the great princes of Europe. In this respect, as in other political matters, an example was set by the king of France, who in 1438 induced a council of French clergy to formulate the famous Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges. It declared the authority of a general council superior to that of the pope, ordered that no papal bull should take effect in France until it had been promulgated by the king, forbade the collection of annates from French prelates, and prohibited the filling of ecclesiastical offices in the kingdom by papal appointment. Although the Pragmatic Sanction was not continuously enforced, it remained the cornerstone of the Gallican Liberties for the next three hundred years.

Effective action of the same sort was prevented in Germany by the paralysis of the central government, and in England by the outbreak of civil war. The issue of reform in the church, however, was not forgotten; it was to reappear in the following century as part of a violent revolution. The papacy, to the distress of many loyal supporters, not only failed to extirpate the ancient abuses, but actually allowed them to become aggravated. Apparently secure in their enjoyment of absolute authority, the popes in the closing decades of the fifteenth century once more became submerged in Italian politics. Distinguished as temporal rulers and as devotees of the new Renaissance culture, they forfeited all respect as leaders of Christendom and even as ex-

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 648.

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 601.

ponents of common decency. The result was the explosion known as the Protestant Revolution.

#### 4. THE BEGINNING OF THE WITCHCRAFT DELUSION

In so far as the church was the dominating institution of the earlier Middle Ages, its decline was the crucial fact in the history of the subsequent period. There was, indeed, no phase of European civilization in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that was not vitally affected by the fading of the old ecclesiastical ideals. The thirteenth century was no golden age when everybody did as he should and all men lived in Christian concord. Yet, to judge from contemporary arts and letters, it was a time of general contentment. Then followed one of mounting trouble and unrest. The political degeneration of the papacy culminated in the Babylonian Captivity, and on that ensued the disgraceful scandal of the schism. Meanwhile the western world was devastated by pestilence, war, and insurrection. The greatest states fell prey to anarchy, while the Turks, after undoing the work of the crusades, resumed the offensive and conquered a large section of Europe. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that literature came to be marked by a tone of pessimism and disillusionment. The theme of death became especially prominent in poetry. The calm restraint of the early Gothic art was superseded by an emotional outburst stressing the tragic and the pathetic. All traditional standards seemed to be threatened with destruction.

Results of  
ecclesi-  
astical  
decline

Although many of the calamities suffered by Europe in the later Middle Ages could not, of course, be justly blamed on the church, it must be admitted that the latter, as an official organization, miserably failed in spiritual leadership. That the clergy, both secular and regular, had generally discredited itself in the eyes of the people is proved by a wealth of sources, and as time went on the situation became steadily worse. These conditions naturally led many to seek religious satisfaction in unorthodox ways; agitation for reform, as we have seen, tended to encourage the growth of heresies. Many, on the other hand, remained loyal to the established order and found consolation in various forms of ecstatic faith. The fourteenth century witnessed the rise of numerous mystics, some of the scholarly type and some not. Within the former group the German Dominican, Eckehart (d. 1327), was prominent. His disciple, Tauler, had much to do with the founding in Germany of a religious association of laymen,

Four-  
teenth-  
century  
mystics

who called themselves the Friends of God. Somewhat similar were the Brothers of the Common Life, established in the Netherlands by Gerard Groote (d. 1384). The New Devotion to which they pledged themselves is eloquently revealed by the well-known *Imitation of Christ*, traditionally ascribed to Thomas à Kempis. The most famous mystic of the age, however, was St. Catherine of Siena (d. 1380), a simple Italian girl who was led by glorious visions to attempt a general reform of the church, and who had a share in bringing the pope back to Rome in 1376. Her letters, of which several hundred have been preserved, are most remarkable not only as expressions of religious fervor, but as examples of early Italian literature.

Chris-  
tianity  
and  
diabolism

Another feature of the unhappy centuries now under discussion was an expanding belief in witchcraft. To understand the beginnings of this strange delusion, it is necessary to keep in mind the distinction between the official doctrine of the early church and the unofficial folklore that accompanied it. One who accepts the authority of the New Testament must, of course, accept a variety of ideas connected with diabolism. From the outset Christians believed in Satan, chief of the fallen angels and Prince of Evil, who had tempted Christ and who continuously sought to lure all men to their destruction. He was supported in his nefarious schemes by a host of lesser devils, who included among their number the pagan deities of the ancient world. Such a demon could enter into possession of one's body, to cause various forms of madness, but could be cast out by divine intervention. So from an early time one rank of the lower clergy had been that of exorcist. Satan's power, obviously, was supernatural, and, though subordinate to the omnipotence of God, might produce all sorts of noxious events, ranging from petty mischief to major calamities like storms and pestilences. Especially since the time of Gregory the Great, Christian literature had been filled with stories of diabolic malice and its counteraction by saintly characters.<sup>19</sup>

Magic and  
sorcery

The Middle Ages also inherited a mass of ideas with regard to magic. The Hebrews, like other ancient peoples, had believed in clairvoyants and mediums—particularly women who, through incantation, could call up the spirits of the dead. Such was the witch of Endor consulted by Saul, and such, presumably, were

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 168.

the witches on whom the later law visited the death penalty.<sup>20</sup> The Romans, on the other hand, made no effort to prohibit magical practices as long as they did not result in crimes otherwise punishable by the state. Murder, for example, led to prosecution before the courts, whether it was alleged to have been committed by natural or supernatural means. Even the educated classes were generally superstitious in matters of this kind, fearing the witch (*malefica*) or the wizard (*maleficus*) who could produce death or disease by applying evil charms to wax images, locks of hair, nail-parings, and the like. The Latin classics, furthermore, contain marvelous stories of men who could change themselves into animals, such as werewolves, and of night-hags who could assume the form of owls, mice, or cats; who rode on the storm wind along with the sinister goddess Hecate, and who prowled about after dark, stealing bits of corpses for use in their infernal rites.

Similar beliefs are heard of from time to time in the Christian sources, where black magic, as distinguished from the holy miracles of the church, is attributed to Satanic influence. By a compact with the devil, one might become a *malefica* or a *maleficus*, and so be able to make love-charms or to injure one's enemies in supernatural ways. But the best authorities were inclined to deprecate such notions as that people could change themselves into animals, that they could ride through the air on broomsticks, have children by demons, or perform many of the marvels attributed to them. As late as the eleventh century the canons of ecclesiastical councils generally assessed penance on any one who was foolish enough to hold that such things were possible. The great schoolmen of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, took an opposite stand. By a characteristic bit of reasoning, they built odds and ends of popular superstition into a logical system that could be theoretically reconciled with the Christian doctrine. To them the ancient yarns of witches and werewolves seemed no more incredible than the stories of Satanic influence enshrined in the pages of the New Testament or of Gregory the Great.

Scholastic  
formulation  
of  
witchcraft

With Thomas Aquinas the process was completed; the most learned doctors had given their blessing to virtually the entire folklore of witchcraft. And in the meantime the principle had been formulated that one who, for the sake of proficiency in the

<sup>20</sup> *I Samuel*, xxviii; *Exodus*, xxii, 18. "Witch," of course, is merely the English translation of a Hebrew word.

black art, had entered into a compact with Satan was *ipso facto* a heretic and punishable as such under the secular law. The Inquisition provided the machinery for hunting down suspects, and thenceforth cases of witchcraft became more and more frequent in the ecclesiastical courts. Already associated in the popular mind with the unbelief of the Albigensians, sorcery appeared prominently in the charges made against the Templars and in many other famous trials of the fourteenth century. In 1431 Jeanne d'Arc was convicted and burned as a witch at Rouen.<sup>21</sup> By such official acts, state and church combined to justify a fear that had already secured firm hold on the popular imagination. For their contributions to the witchcraft mania of the subsequent age the scholastics have been bitterly denounced by a number of eloquent writers, but it is hard to see how their academic learning could to any great extent have affected public opinion throughout the countryside. Was it not rather the experts who followed the masses? Psychologically, at any rate, the growth of belief in witchcraft during the later Middle Ages seems to have been merely another phase of the increased misery and discontent. Such a procession of calamities as those suffered by the people demanded explanation, and the simplest one that could be made was in terms of the supernatural. Universal dread and suspicion, fostered by the evil times, found expression in the denunciation of witches. And once started, the delusion of a vast Satanic conspiracy for the ruin of the world gained crushing headway.

The witch  
bull of  
1484

How far belief in witchcraft had advanced by the latter half of the fifteenth century is shown by the famous witch bull of Innocent VIII in 1484. Therein the pope declares that he has heard that in certain districts of Germany<sup>22</sup>

many persons of both sexes, heedless of their own salvation and forsaking the catholic faith, give themselves over to devils male and female, and by their incantations, charms, and conjurings, and by other abominable superstitions and sortileges, offenses, crimes, and misdeeds, ruin and cause to perish the offspring of women, the foal of animals, the products of the earth, the grapes of vines, and the fruits of trees, as well as men and women, cattle and flocks and herds and animals of every kind, vineyards also and orchards, meadows, pas-

<sup>21</sup> See above, p. 627.

<sup>22</sup> The following translation is taken from the University of Pennsylvania (Department of History), *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, III, no. 4.

tures, harvests, grains, and other fruits of the earth; that they afflict and torture with dire pains and anguish, both internal and external, these men, women, cattle, flocks, herds, and animals, and hinder men from begetting and women from conceiving, and prevent all consummation of marriage; that, moreover, they deny with sacrilegious lips the faith they received in holy baptism; and that, at the instigation of the enemy of mankind, they do not fear to commit and perpetrate many other abominable offenses and crimes, at the risk of their own souls, to the insult of the divine majesty, and to the pernicious example and scandal of multitudes.

And since it appears that the two inquisitors deputed to punish heresy in these districts have been hindered in their activity by misguided persons, the pope explicitly confirms their authority with regard to the extirpation of witchcraft. All clergy and laity, under threat of severe penalty, are prohibited from in any way interfering with their holy work.

This bull, of course, did not enjoin belief in witchcraft as an article of Christian faith. By enumerating the acts of sorcery committed in Germany, it merely stated the current views shared even by the educated of that time. The pope issued the document as a routine matter to confirm the principle that witchcraft was a form of heresy. Thus encouraged, the two Dominicans, Kramer and Sprenger, proceeded to write on that subject a manual for inquisitors, called *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Hammer of Witches). In it all the details taken for granted by the papal bull are fully set forth under three main headings. The first part expounds the doctrinal basis, showing by scholastic argument under eighteen questions why it is necessary for Christians to believe in the numerous manifestations of witchcraft. The second describes the wicked acts that are performed by sorcerers and prescribes remedies by which the Satanic guile may be successfully met. The third then explains the procedure followed in the detection and trial of suspects. On the whole, the book contained little that was absolutely new, but as a convenient summary of established belief and practice, it was widely used during the intensive witch-hunt of the ensuing period, and by its clarity and precision it undoubtedly helped to crystallize scholarly opinion.

The  
*Malleus*  
*Malefi-*  
*carum*  
(1486)

Unfortunately, there was no one then who thought of denying the assumptions of the *Malleus* or of condemning the heartless procedure which it so coolly advocated. Today Catholic and

Protestant agree that at least four-fifths of the witch persecution was sheer hysteria. This attitude was unknown even among the intellectual leaders of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is a sad commentary on the age that what we consider a matter of elementary enlightenment was totally absent from the contemporary reforms in both religion and education.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE ADVANCE OF SECULAR CULTURE

#### I. VERNACULAR LITERATURE: ITALIAN

IN 1301 Boniface VIII, thinking to drive the Aragonese from Sicily, called to Rome Charles of Valois, younger brother of Philip IV. The southern project came to nothing, but while he was in Italy Charles successfully carried out a lesser commission in the papal interest. On the pretext of establishing peace between two warring factions at Florence, Boniface actually helped one to destroy the other and so, indirectly, secured control of the city. The final scene occurred in 1302, when the Blacks drove into exile some hundreds of unfortunate Whites, and among the latter was Dante Alighieri. The son of a prominent lawyer, he was then approaching the age of thirty-seven. For the past twenty years he had taken an active part in the troubled politics of the republic, being enrolled, as a non-noble eligible for office, in one of the greater gilds. When Charles of Valois entered Florence, Dante was one of the six priors, the highest magistrates of the city. And since he had become known as an antagonist of the pope, his condemnation on a trumped-up charge of embezzling public funds was quite to be expected. Thus Florence lost a politician and the world gained an illustrious poet, for thenceforth the exile had but one career, that of literature.

Dante  
Alighieri  
(1265-  
1321)

Before this, Dante had long been associated with a group of talented Florentines—scholars, writers, musicians, and artists, among whom was the famous painter, Giotto.<sup>1</sup> Dante himself took a keen interest in all intellectual and æsthetic pursuits. Although the details of his education remain unknown, we may be sure that it was of the scholastic type then prevalent throughout the universities of the west, for his familiarity with the great texts of the schools is proved by his works. But from boyhood Dante had also come under the powerful influence of the vernacular poets. Some Italians, loyal to an ancient tradition, still wrote in Provençal; others, adopting a fashion set under Frederick II,<sup>2</sup> preferred one of the native dialects. Dante, for reasons that he

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 719.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 538.



was subsequently to expound at length, followed the example of the latter. In producing lyrics he engaged in an occupation long popular with his fellow bourgeois, and it was not unusual that his verse should celebrate a beautiful lady whom he was compelled to adore from a distance. His treatment of the familiar theme, however, was strikingly original.

The *Vita  
Nuova*

The story of a love that was destined to be immortal is charmingly told in Dante's first book, the *Vita Nuova*—the New Life to which he was introduced by Beatrice. It was at the age of nine, a number (three times three) wherein he found great mystic significance, that he first saw his lady, then a girl of eight. Exactly nine years later, at the ninth hour of the day, he chanced to encounter her on the street, and she not only looked at him but spoke to him. Having thus for the first time heard her voice, he was given a tragic vision in a dream, to describe which he wrote a sonnet, the beginning of a long series. Actually he never came nearer to his love than on that day. Beatrice married another man, and Dante, while composing ecstatic songs, only saw her on rare occasions. In 1290 the lady prematurely died, and two years later the poet himself took a wife, with whom, though she remained unsung in his verse, he seems to have lived happily. The *Vita Nuova* was obviously written to introduce the lyrics which Dante had from time to time composed earlier, but the book is more than a literary artifice. It serves to explain how the author's love for Beatrice, further idealized after her death, became a mystic guide leading him toward ultimate truth.

The  
*Convivio*

At the close of the *Vita Nuova* we are told how, in a vision, Beatrice had inspired Dante to proceed with certain labors so that he might speak of her more worthily. Within half a dozen years after his exile, these labors led him to begin the *Convivio* (Banquet)—a curious mixture of verse and prose, of personal reminiscence and scholastic reasoning. Through the elaborate allegory of a spiritual feast, the reader was to be introduced to universal knowledge, but the work was left unfinished. It is interesting, first, because it reveals the author devoting himself to study in order to forget his bereavement. By reading Boëthius and Cicero, he had discovered that the Lady Philosophy might govern his mature life even as the Lady Beatrice had governed his youth. A second remarkable feature of the book is its use of the vernacular, which shows that Dante, a bourgeois and a

layman like Jean de Meun,<sup>3</sup> was interested in popularizing the learning of the schools. The Florentine poet, however, was contemplating a literary project infinitely grander than the *Romance of the Rose*, and to justify his preference for Italian he presented a lengthy argument.

This subject, broached in the *Convivio*, was developed in a separate essay called *De Vulgari Eloquentia*—a defense of the vulgar tongue, put into Latin so that it would be read by the learned. At the outset Dante briefly considers the origin of human speech, accepting the orthodox view that men spoke Hebrew from the Creation until they incurred God's anger by attempting to build the tower of Babel. He passes rapidly over the ensuing confusion of tongues and so comes to the three related languages of *oïl* (French), *oc* (Provençal), and *si* (Italian). Of these the first two, he says, have both proved their fitness for literary composition. The last, on the other hand, has suffered from the fact that it is a jumble of fourteen dialects, each of which has grave defects. Having given examples to prove his point, Dante decides that literary Italian must be the speech that would prevail at the imperial court if only there were one in Italy. Such a courtly language, combining the best features of all the dialects and being common to the peninsula, is what he proposes to adopt for his own poetry. The invention of a fine-drawn theory to justify a wholly practical conclusion is very characteristic of the author.

*De Vulgari  
Eloquentia*

A similar disquisition is found in the *De Monarchia*, another Latin essay, dealing with the nature of the state. Dante, exiled from his beloved Florence through the political machinations of Boniface VIII, had no love for the papal pretension to sovereignty in both spiritual and temporal affairs. But his Ghibellinism was more than spite. He dreamed of Italy united and happy under a strong kingship, and to him the king could only be the emperor. So he applauded the vain attempt of Henry VII to restore the monarchy and wrote a pamphlet in defense of what had long been a lost cause. The book repeats and amplifies a very old contention—that the empire, being itself a divine establishment, is quite independent of the papacy.<sup>4</sup> And Dante's thesis is thoroughly scholastic in that it accepts the conventional symbolism and seeks merely to pick flaws in the papalists' logic. They, he

*De Mo-  
narchia*

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 508.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 318.

says, have insisted that, since the moon shines by reflected light, the state is inferior to the church. He does not think of denying that the sun and the moon respectively typify the church and the state; he alleges that the moon really has a light of her own and does not borrow everything from the sun. He reinterprets such famous texts as Boniface VIII cited in his bull *Unam Sanctam*.<sup>5</sup> And to clinch his argument, he states that Christ would never have chosen to be born under the Roman Empire if it had not been the perfect form of government!

The  
Divine  
Comedy

Interesting as they are, these minor works are utterly dwarfed by the magnificent *Commedia*, which came to occupy Dante's later years. The *Divine Comedy*, as it is generally known, is unlike anything else that has ever been written. Though epic in its scope and solemnity, it is by no means an impersonal narrative. In a way it is a tale of adventure, but the adventure is such as no man could ever really have, and the hero is Dante himself, who relates in the first person what he has seen and heard. This feature permits the author to display his own emotions whenever he pleases, thus giving to many passages an intensely lyric quality. The subject matter of the poem is equally remarkable, for under its three headings of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise Dante deals with the entire universe—God and the world and all the creatures who have inhabited it. Nor is he restricted to the thought and actions of dead men; his literary device gives unlimited opportunity for criticism of contemporary society. In substance, therefore, the *Divine Comedy* is essentially a *Summa*, like that of Aquinas;<sup>6</sup> yet in form it is a vernacular poem, combining and developing elements drawn from the epic, romantic, and lyric compositions of the preceding two centuries. The man who could conceive of such an enterprise, perfect a language in which to express himself, and then complete the work with sustained artistry must always be recognized as a towering genius.

Hell

To give any idea of the *Divine Comedy* as poetry is here out of the question. The meter and triple rhyme of the original have never been satisfactorily reproduced in English, and the theme is such that a few haphazard quotations are quite useless. Nor can any but a brief indication be made of the contents. The scene is laid in the year 1300. Dante, lost in a forest, is being attacked by certain symbolic beasts when he is rescued by Vergil,

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 517.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 518.

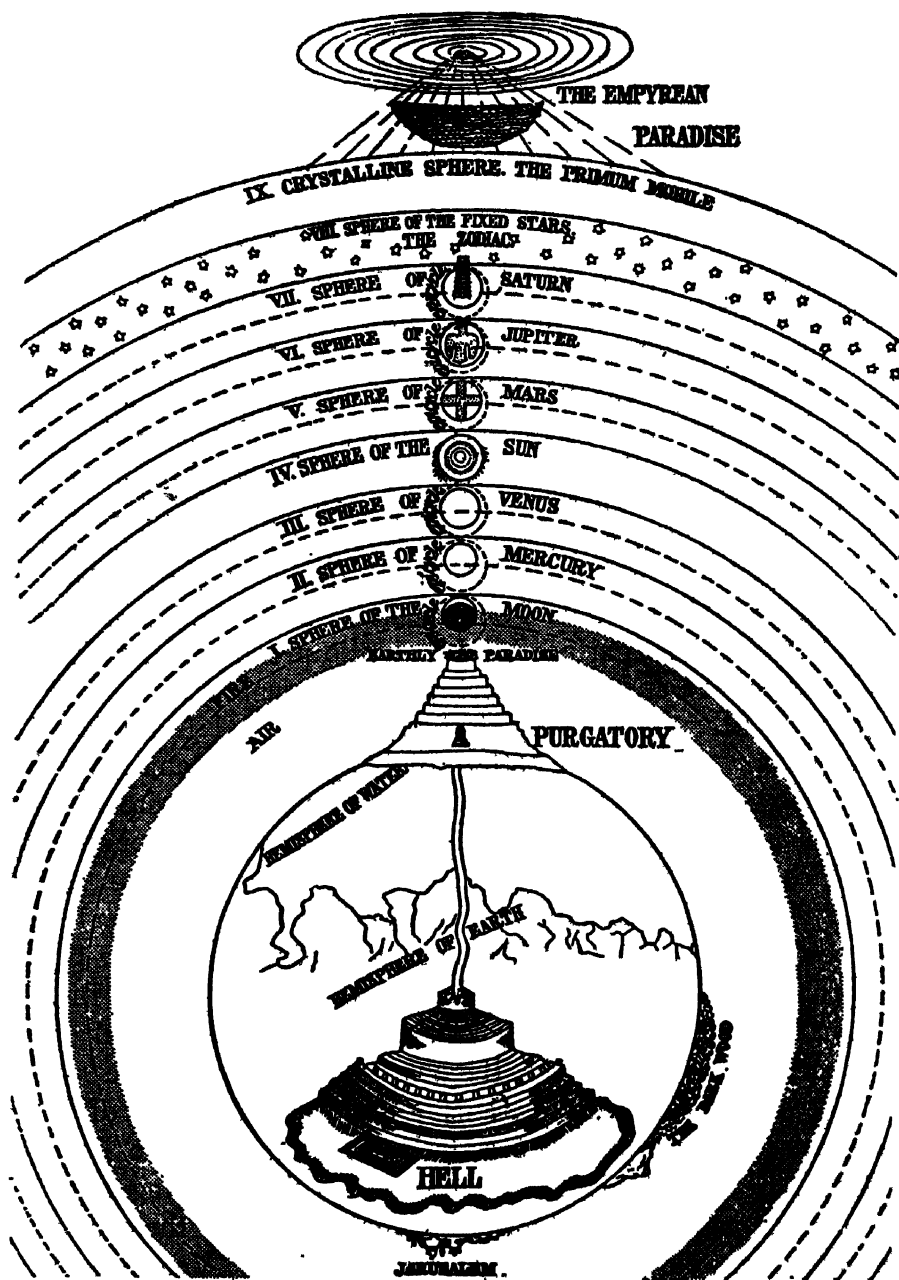


FIGURE 18.—DANTE'S SCHEME OF THE UNIVERSE (adapted from the plan of M. Caetani in *La Materia della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*).

who explains that he has come at the request of Beatrice in paradise. He himself, as a virtuous pagan, has been condemned to limbo, a sort of neutral zone just inside hell, through which he offers to escort his fellow poet. The two descend thither by an underground passage. Hell is a hollow cone with its point reaching to the center of the spherical earth (see Figure 18). It is divided into a series of nine circles, of which the topmost is limbo. There Dante sees Vergil's companions in exclusion from heaven, including Hector, Æneas, Cæsar, Lucretia, Aristotle, Plato, Orpheus, Cicero, Seneca, Euclid, Ptolemy, Avicenna, Averroës, and Saladin. The souls of the good Hebrews, he is told, have been removed to heaven. In the second circle are the lustful—among them Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, Achilles, and Tristan. And below it Dante passes through the circles of the gluttonous, the slothful, the avaricious, the violent, the false, and the traitorous, each group suffering direr punishment than the one above it. He encounters many Italian acquaintances and from them hears various prophecies. Among the simoniacs in the eighth circle he finds Pope Nicholas III, who momentarily mistakes him for Boniface VIII and who predicts that the latter will soon arrive and then be joined by Clement V.

Purgatory  
and  
paradise

Finally, after discovering Brutus, Cassius, and Judas Iscariot among the traitors at the bottom of the pit, Dante and his guide emerge by another passage to the hemisphere opposite that of the inhabited earth. Here is situated the mountain of purgatory, to which those who have died absolved by the church are ferried by angels. The mountain is the converse of hell, with nine ledges where the souls of the repentant are compelled to perform labors in proportion to the evil which they did while alive. In this region, too, Dante sees many famous characters and speaks to a number of recently arrived Italians. On the top of the mountain he enters the earthly paradise—the original garden of Eden—where he has a series of ecstatic visions and where Beatrice assumes charge of his further progress. She, looking into the sun like an eagle, draws him up through the air to the encircling spheres of the seven planets: the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.<sup>7</sup> Each is visited in turn and Dante finds out many new facts, both astronomical and theological. Beatrice herself explains to him the cause of the spots on the

<sup>7</sup> On the crystal spheres, see above, p. 210; on the eagle, above, p. 490.

moon, the nature of the angels, and the distribution of the blessed in paradise according to the principles of symbolic justice.

In the course of his tour Dante is also able to converse with many of the departed great. In the sphere of Mercury, among the souls of the active, he finds Justinian, who expounds the history of the Roman Empire. In that of the sun the spirits of the wise are identified for him by St. Thomas Aquinas—among them Albert the Great, Peter Lombard, Gratian, Orosius, Boëthius, Isidore of Seville, and Solomon. The great schoolman also sketches the history of the mendicant orders, bitterly commenting on their present decadence. In Mars, along with Charlemagne, Roland, and other soldiers of the Cross, Dante encounters his own crusading ancestor, who describes Florence in the good old days, foretells Dante's unjust exile, and assures him fame on account of the work which he shall publish. In Saturn, St. Benedict discusses the foundation of his order and laments the fact that his rule has fallen into complete neglect. In the heaven of the fixed stars Dante is examined by St. Peter, who approves his faith and encourages him to speak boldly concerning the present degeneration of the papacy. Finally, in the Empyrean, the topmost heaven, Dante is accorded a brief glimpse of God, and the tale of his mystic adventure comes to an end.

Such a poem as the *Divine Comedy* utterly defies an attempt at brief appreciation. As is proved by the library of criticism which it has inspired, there is not a canto in any of its three parts that does not demand profound study, both as a literal narrative and as an allegory. The sheer weight of erudition implied in its composition is, to say the least, formidable. Yet Dante was anything but a pedant. Being a very great poet, he gave to his work a beauty of expression and a depth of feeling that remain unsurpassed in literature. Although we may dislike his crude descriptions of torments in hell, and smile at his naïve catalogue of the saved and the damned, we cannot doubt his passionate sincerity. It is that which gives to his writing the force of an Old Testament prophecy. Dante was intensely religious, and his religion, despite his attack on individual priests, was thoroughly orthodox. It was, in fact, the mediæval church that, through the teachings of the schoolmen, provided him with the materials for his book. And he was keenly interested in the contemporary world. This truth is shown by his popularization of science—the best that the age afforded—and by his devotion to

The quality of Dante's poetry

his native tongue. From that day to this, literary Italian has remained essentially the language that he perfected.

The very qualities that made the *Divine Comedy* a great and original work made Dante's lyrics somewhat less than models of their kind. The vein of mystic allegory that runs through them is interesting to the student of his character, but detracts from their charm as love songs. Dante's earliest sonnet—if we are to believe the *Vita Nuova*—was a strange production for a youth of eighteen, who had just heard his lady's voice for the first time.<sup>8</sup>

To each enamored soul and gentle heart  
 To sight of whom these presents shall be brought,  
 That unto me they may remit their thought,  
 May Love, their lord, felicity impart!  
 Two thirds were wanting still, ere should depart  
 The time when stars with light are chiefly fraught,  
 When Love came sudden to my view unsought,  
 In guise that but to image is to start.  
 Bearing my heart within his hand he came;  
 Blithe, as meseemed; within his arms was laid  
 My lady in a coverlet asleep.  
 Then woke he her, and with that heart aflame  
 Obsequious fed; she ate as one afraid;  
 And as he went, I saw that he did weep.

Fine as it is, the poem lacks the grace of simplicity; to be understood, it needs a commentary.

Petrarch  
 (1304-74)

For the reason that Dante's verse is generally of the same sort—a little abstruse for popular taste—the title of Italy's foremost lyric poet has been awarded rather to a man of the next generation, Francesco Petrarca.<sup>9</sup> He also was of a Florentine family, the son of a notary exiled along with Dante in 1302. In 1313, when Petrarch was nine, his father moved to the papal territory near Avignon and it was there that the boy received instruction in grammar. Later he studied law at Montpellier and Bologna, but gained only a dislike for the subject. So, on his father's death in 1326, Petrarch took holy orders, hoping thereby to secure the necessary leisure for a literary career. How he eventually came to devote himself wholly to classical study will be seen

<sup>8</sup> R. Garnett, *CXXIV Sonnets* (John Lane: London, 1896), p. 5. This and the sonnet below on p. 694 are reprinted here by permission of the publisher

<sup>9</sup> Originally Petracco.

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in the following pages. Here we are concerned merely with his writing in the vernacular. If Petrarch found inspiration in the poets of the Augustan Age, he was assuredly not the first who had done so since the revival of Latin letters in the twelfth century.<sup>10</sup> And if the glance of an adored lady brought him a fresh rapture in the beauties of nature, his experience was that of a thousand troubadours who had sung before he was born.

Happily for the poet, his art does not demand the constant invention of new themes. To be accorded the highest honor, he need only appeal to the emotions common to mankind. Petrarch's lyrics have proved immortal not because of his scholarship, but in spite of it. There is no explaining genius, which can produce marvels of beauty from the most ordinary materials. Thus Petrarch glorified a love which most men would have found altogether trivial. Laura, he tells us, he first saw on April 6, 1327, in a church at Avignon. Who the lady was we do not know. She was apparently the wife of another, and she paid no attention to Petrarch, who was left to pine at a romantic distance. This ideal attachment, it may be noted, remained unaffected by his priesthood, and neither the one nor the other prevented his living with a woman who was not his wife. Petrarch, after alternately cursing and glorying in his foolish passion, thought that the old wound had been healed, when in 1348 it was reopened by the news of Laura's death. The result was another series of poems, superior to most of those that had preceded. Altogether, he composed over three hundred sonnets, and although many of them are spoiled by overindulgence in tricks of rhetoric, some have always been counted among the world's masterpieces of lyric verse.

*Sonnets  
in the  
Life and  
Death of  
Laura*

Petrarch is at his best in such unpretentious songs as those wherein he praises his lady's golden hair, blesses the grass and flowers that bear the impress of his lady's foot, or celebrates the glove that has covered his lady's hand.<sup>11</sup>

O lovely hand that lightly holds my heart,  
That needs but close to press my life away. . . .

He wrote at least one unforgettable sonnet praying God to deliver him from his shameful bondage. But with Petrarch the

<sup>10</sup> See above, pp. 447 f.

<sup>11</sup> The two following quotations are from Morris Bishop, *Love Rimes of Petrarch* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1932), and are used by permission.



mood of repentance is exceptional. Even when he has realized that his love is hopeless, his resignation is not that of a devout believer.

Once I besought her mercy with my sighs,  
 Striving in love-rime to communicate  
 My pain, to see in that immaculate  
 Unmelting heart the fires of pity rise.  
 I longed the freezing cloud that round her lies  
 In the eloquent winds of love to dissipate—  
 Or else I'd rouse against her all men's hate  
 Because she hid from me her lovely eyes.  
 But now I wish no longer hate for her,  
 Nor for me pity; for I know at last  
 In vain against my fate I spend my breath.  
 Only I'll sing how she is lovelier  
 Than the divine, that, when my flesh is cast,  
 The world may know how happy was my death.

And at Laura's death he finds little consolation in the orthodox faith.<sup>12</sup>

The eyes whose praise I penned with glowing thought,  
 And countenance and limbs and all fair worth  
 That sundered me from men of mortal birth—  
 From them dissevered, in myself distraught—  
 The clustering locks, with golden glory fraught;  
 The sudden-shining smile, as angels' mirth,  
 Wonted to make a paradise on earth;  
 Are now a little dust that feels not aught.  
 Still I have life, who rail and rage at it,  
 Lorn of love's light that solely life endears,  
 Mastless before the hurricane I flit.  
 Be this my last of lays to mortal ears;  
 Dried is the ancient fountain of my wit,  
 And all my music melted into tears.

The develop-  
 ment of  
 secular  
 literature

It is in truth a strange commentary on the age that of the two great Florentine poets the fervent Christian was a layman, the pagan at heart was a priest. Throughout his entire career, as will be more clearly seen below, Petrarch's true passion was for secular literature. This attitude was not without precedent. The foregoing two centuries had produced a mass of writing—much of it from the pens of clergymen—which was almost entirely

<sup>12</sup> The following quotation is from R. Garnett, *CXXIV Sonnets*, p. 78.

free of ecclesiastical influence. Such works were not so much anti-Christian as non-Christian, being composed in the vernacular for a lay audience that delighted in love songs, tales of adventure, and amusing stories of all sorts. Petrarch's æsthetic heritage was that of the troubadours, whose art—whatever its precise origin—was essentially pagan in spirit. Nor was the bourgeois poetry of the Middle Ages any less worldly. The *fabliaux*, when not positively immoral, were quite careless of devout opinion. Even such an innocent romance as *Aucassin and Nicolette* was distinctly irreverent in tone. The *Romance of the Rose* was not only anti-clerical, but very nearly anti-religious in its rationalism. Although much of this literature had no meaning for Petrarch, it was of great significance for the most talented of his literary associates.

Giovanni Boccaccio was born in 1313, the son of a Florentine merchant and a Parisian woman. As a boy, he was apprenticed to a trader for six years and it was presumably during this period that he lived for a time in France and acquired an intimate knowledge of the French language. But Giovanni had only distaste for the profession of his father, who finally agreed that he might study canon law at Naples. This subject the youth came to detest even more than commerce; so, at about twenty years of age, he returned to his father's calling, living first at Naples and then at Florence. That he ever became much of a business man may well be doubted, for his only real interest was in literature. Since an early age he had composed verses, and as he attained manhood he more and more devoted himself to writing. By this time, too, he had become the ardent lover of a Neapolitan lady whom he celebrated as Fiametta. Whether or not she was the illegitimate daughter of the king is a matter of slight importance; through her inspiration Boccaccio composed not only lyrics, but also a series of tales, allegories, and romances after French models, some in verse and some in prose. It was not until after 1350 that, on coming to reside at Florence, he became acquainted with Petrarch, who thenceforth exerted an increasing influence over him.

Boccaccio  
(1313-75)

Although Boccaccio expressed a great admiration for Dante and tried to get Petrarch to share his enthusiasm, it seems highly doubtful that he ever had any real appreciation of the *Divine Comedy*; he certainly had no liking for religious mysticism. As far as Petrarch was concerned, his sonnets proved the despair

The  
*Decameron*

of Boccaccio, who wisely decided to concentrate on a literary project better suited to his own genius. The result was the justly famed *Decameron*, which was completed shortly after the middle of the century. The book is too familiar—even to American undergraduates—to need an elaborate description here. It is, of course, a collection of prose stories presumed to be told by a company of Florentines, cultured ladies and gentlemen, who have shut themselves up to escape the plague. The Black Death was a very real visitation in Italy during the 1340's and Boccaccio's graphic description is one of the classics on the subject. But in the *Decameron* it serves merely to introduce a string of tales which in large part he had already written. Few if any of them were original with him. Many he took bodily from the French *fabliaux*; some he copied from ancient authors like Apuleius, who long before had cribbed them out of earlier compilations; others he picked up in the streets of Florence or wherever else a spicy anecdote was relished. They have only one element in common, that they are in some way entertaining. They vary from the extremely delicate to the grossly licentious. They are told without the slightest pretense of a didactic aim; their only object is to gain a laugh or a sigh. They reveal the author as a man of the world writing for a worldly audience, neither of them caring in the least for the conventional idealism of the church.

As a whole, the *Decameron* is as little a reforming pamphlet as it is a sermon. Its attitude is precisely that of the *fabliaux*. People are accepted as they are and given whatever amuses them. In the tales priests and monks appear prominently, and rarely to their credit, because a clergyman in a *risqué* situation never fails of a laugh. The humor, though not always clean, is quite irresistible. And as far as the smut is concerned, it must be admitted that Boccaccio added nothing that was not richly provided by his originals. As yet no one dreamed of expurgating that sort of literature; many generations were to pass before delicate language became fashionable in polite circles. In any case, whatever may be thought of the author's taste in such matters, the *Decameron* is a masterpiece of art. It is brilliantly written in a graceful, smooth-flowing style that admirably reflects the changing moods of the narrative. The first great work in Italian prose, it has exerted a powerful influence on the literary development of that nation. In spite of its disreputable features, it yet stands as a model of composition alongside the works of Dante and Petrarch.

## 2. VERNACULAR LITERATURE: ENGLISH AND FRENCH

While Italian was blossoming as a literary language, what we know as English was gradually taking form. At the opening of the fourteenth century French was still spoken at the royal court, and elsewhere in England it was known as a matter of course by educated persons generally. But in both town and country, in the homes of all classes, the ancient vernacular had steadily gained at the expense of that imported by the Normans. There were several dialects. That of the north we know as Scottish; that of the south lingers on in rural communities and occasionally appears as a quaint or comic touch in modern novels. Our English is based rather on the speech of the Midlands, the ancient Anglo-Saxon of Mercia modified by and largely mixed with the spoken French of the Normans. Except for this influence, we today should probably be using a language somewhat resembling modern Flemish. By the thirteenth century the French of England had become a joke to the authors of the *fabliaux*, and as time went on, except as it was learned from foreign teachers, it became worse and worse. Long after it had disappeared from other official documents, it persisted in law reports as a strange and ludicrous jargon—to produce such classics as the account of the trial where the prisoner “ject un brickbat a le dit justice que narrowly mist.”<sup>18</sup>

The  
English  
language

Meanwhile the English vernacular, after obscure progress in a series of minor writings, had suddenly attained glory in the works of Chaucer, Langland, and Wycliffe. The last of these eminent contemporaries has been dealt with in the preceding chapter. From the viewpoint of literature, his great contribution was the translation of the Bible which is associated with his name. What part, if any, he had in the work remains doubtful; but the Wycliffite Bible was the first complete English version to be made of the Scriptures. Of the two texts to come down to us the earlier is stiff and crude—too obviously a literal rendering of the Latin. The later, on the other hand, testifies to a skillful revision by some one—said to have been John Purvey—with a good ear for idiomatic expression. Here we find emerging the majestic prose which was to reach perfection in the authorized version of King James two hundred years later. And although

Wycliffe's  
English  
Bible

<sup>18</sup> Cited by F. W. Maitland, *English Law and the Renaissance*, p. 18.

at first sight this fourteenth-century English looks hard on account of the obsolete spelling, most of it can be read by the modern student without great difficulty.

As far as Langland is concerned, scholars are still disputing whether a person by that name wrote all or any of the poems that have traditionally borne his name. The *Vision of Piers Plowman* exists in three forms, each marked by peculiarities of thought and diction. For this reason, though all three date from the later fourteenth century, it seems unlikely that they were the product of a single author. More probably we have to do with a series of revisions and amplifications by various persons. But such problems must be left to the decision of specialists. Here it will be sufficient to note the outstanding features of the original work, the author of which may just as well be called Langland as anything else. The poem is remarkable in many ways. It is written in the old alliterative verse that had come down from the Anglo-Saxon period, and its language, compared with that of Chaucer, is archaic. This is the beginning, in the modernized English of Skeat.<sup>14</sup>

In a summer season, when soft was the sun,  
I enshrouded me well in a shepherd's garb,  
And robed as a hermit, unholy of works,  
Went wide through the world, all wonders to hear.  
And on a May morning, on Malvern hills,  
Strange fancies befel me, and fairy-like dreams.  
I was weary of wand'ring, and went to repose  
On a broad green bank, by a burn-side;  
As I lay there and leaned and looked on the waters,  
I slumbered and slept, they sounded so merry.

Came moving before me a marvellous vision;  
I was lost in a wild waste; but where, I discerned not.  
I beheld in the east, on high, near the sun,  
A tower on a hill-top, with turrets well wrought;  
A deep dale beneath, and a dungeon therein,  
With deep ditches and dark, and dreadful to see.  
A fair field, full of folk, I found there between,  
Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,  
All working or wand'ring, as the world requires.

<sup>14</sup> In *The King's Classics* (Alexander Moring, Ltd.: London, 1905), used by permission of the publisher.

## THE ADVANCE OF SECULAR CULTURE 699

Here, as explained later, was the earth, situated between the Tower of Truth, which was heaven, and the Castle of Care, which was hell. The earth was filled with all manner of persons, but the rascals seemed to be more prominent. The dreamer perceived sturdy plowmen, earning "the gain which the great ones in glut-tony waste"; prosperous merchants, honest gleemen, devout monks, faithful priests, and other sincere Christians. They were too rare among the hordes of "jugglers and jesters, all Judas's children"; the beggars and beadsmen, intent only on cramming their bags and their bellies; pilgrims and palmers, whose journeys to holy shrines had merely served to make them professional liars; false hermits, "great lubbers and long, that to labor were loath"; friars of all sorts,

Allegory  
of the  
earth

Who preached to the people for personal profit;  
As it seemed to them good, put a gloss on the gospel,  
And explained it at pleasure; they coveted copes.

There was also a pardoner, cheating the poor folk with indulgences under a bull which no prelate worth his two ears would ever have sealed. There appeared bishops and bachelors, masters and doctors, who, though holding parishes, spent their time in London to serve the king or to sing masses for silver. They were almost as mercenary as the lawyers.

I saw then a hundred, in hoods all of silk,  
All serjeants, it seemed, that served at the bar,  
Pleading their causes for pence or for pounds,  
But for love of our Lord their lips moved never!  
Sooner measure the mist upon Malvern hills  
Than see a mouth mumble ere money be shown!

Nor were the laborers all worthy of their hire. Many were loafers who did nothing all day but sing, while the hawkers shouted their wares: "Hot pies, hot!"—"Good geese and good bacon!"—"White wine of Alsace!"—"Red Gascony wine!"

This vivid prologue is followed by the lively allegory of Lady Meed, the personification of unjust reward—or what is popularly known as graft. Her proposed marriage to False led to a lawsuit, and all parties proceeded to London to have the case tried before the king. Although Meed had in her train an army of devotees, including all the lawyers, the king was eventually brought to listen to Reason and to put Meed out of his court. So ends the first vision, but the dreamer soon has a second. Con-

Lady  
Meed and  
Piers  
Plowman

science appeared in the field full of folk and preached repentance. First one and then another of his listeners was moved to seek forgiveness. The seven deadly sins, each personified by an individual man, made confession of their evil lives. That of Glutton, in particular, remains one of the most graphic passages in English literature, for it includes a realistic picture of the contemporary alehouse and its ribald company. Finally a multitude of repentant sinners set out on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Truth, but none knew the way thither. Before long they met a palmer, tricked out with all the symbols of the profession and covered with holy relics. He had been to Sinai, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Babylon, Armenia, and Alexandria. Could he tell where to find St. Truth?

“Nay,” said the good man, “so God be my guide,  
I saw never a palmer with pikestaff or scrip  
That asked for him ever, ere now in this place.”

Then the plowman Piers said that he knew the answer; he had faithfully served Truth for the past fifty years. So the pilgrims asked Piers to lead them, and he promised to do so if they would help him with his plowing. They agreed, and after much trouble with the lazy and quarrelsome, the work was done. The only result, however, was that Piers became embroiled in an argument with a priest, during which the dreamer awoke, “meatless and moneyless on Malvern hills.”

The author of this astonishing work was not only a great literary artist; he was likewise a penetrating critic of existing conditions in church and state. As may be seen even from the foregoing excerpts, his allegorical satire was such as could be grasped by any intelligent hearer, whether educated or not, for it was based on the everyday experience of the people. Although the book contains no doctrine of revolution, it breathes the discontent that produced the insurrection of 1381. To the student of social problems it holds a peculiar interest as an early and eloquent defense of the common man, typified by Piers the Plowman. The poem had an enormous success and so inspired various writers to attempt amendments and continuations. Some of the supplementary material is very remarkable, but in general its insertion tended to spoil the coherence and dramatic force of the original. Langland, if that was the author's name, obviously had much in common with Wycliffe, the preacher and reformer.

## THE ADVANCE OF SECULAR CULTURE 701

In spite of the fact that both were poets, Langland and Chaucer were radically different. One, in the intensity of his religious fervor, resembled Dante; the other, with his good-humored worldliness, was more like Boccaccio. No doubt the contrast was in part due to the fact that Chaucer was very far from being meatless and moneyless. He was the son of a prosperous London vintner employed in the king's financial administration. The boy, born somewhere between 1340 and 1345, was given a good education, becoming familiar with Latin, French, and Italian. Later he is said to have studied law, and, though not a scholar, he gained a knowledge of many learned subjects by wide reading. As a youth, he was attached to the household of John of Gaunt and saw service in the French wars. After 1370 he was employed on various diplomatic missions to Italy and France, and was appointed to several responsible posts in the royal government. He and his wife continued to enjoy high favor at court. He owned a house in London and estates in the country. At least on one occasion he sat in parliament. Meanwhile he had gained international renown as an author. Dying in 1400, he was buried in Westminster Abbey—an event that subsequently led to the formation of the famous Poets' Corner.

Geoffrey  
Chaucer  
(d. 1400)

Among Chaucer's works, which include many translations and adaptations from the French and the Italian, only the *Canterbury Tales* need be mentioned here, and that book is too familiar to require more than brief comment. In the history of the English language it is much more important than *Piers Plowman*. Chaucer adopted the colloquial English of the capital with its rich intermixture of French, and the fact that we can read it with such ease shows how our speech is descended from his rather than from Langland's. To the old alliterative verse Chaucer preferred the meters and rhyme systems that had been perfected on the continent. Even his materials were largely drawn from Boccaccio or from such sources as the latter had used. Writing in this way, an inferior poet would have produced little more than poor imitations. That Chaucer, despite all his borrowings, could create an artistic masterpiece is sufficient evidence of his genius. Like the *Decameron*, Chaucer's book is a collection of stories, for the most part old. The way in which they were skillfully retold for an English audience and presented, each in its most appropriate style of verse or prose, must always

The *Can-*  
*terbury*  
*Tales*



fascinate the special student of literature. But to the historian the part that is of prime significance is the prologue.

The  
prologue:  
Laymen

There the poet describes the company assembled in the Tabard Inn at Southwark—the group of persons who are to amuse one another by telling stories while they journey to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury. It is a magnificent series of portraits, deserving all the praise that has been lavished on it for the past five centuries. And it is simple enough to be read by every one in the original; to attempt a paraphrase would be useless. One or two special points in connection with its vivid portrayal of contemporary society may, however, be indicated. As would be expected in the work of a prosperous bourgeois courtier, no satire is directed against the upper or middle classes. The pictures of the knight and of the squire, his son, are highly idealized; even their servant, the forester-yeoman, is a fine fellow. Nothing unkind is said of the country gentry. The franklin is merely a substantial landowner, fond of good eating. The reeve, to be sure, is hard and avaricious; but so an efficient manager of estates has to be. The merchant, the manciple, and the shipman are worthy people. The various artisans are hardly more than mentioned, unless we include in their number the miller and the inimitable wife of Bath. Both seem like characters drawn from life. The former—red-whiskered and loud-mouthed, with a hairy wart on his nose—is unpleasant merely as an individual. And Chaucer, of course, does not imply that cloth-makers were usually mannish women who had buried five husbands. The plowman is given hearty praise as a God-fearing laborer who at any time is willing to help out an unfortunate comrade. The serjeant of law is not as he is described by Langland; he is a wise and highly respected man, with merely the foible of liking to appear busier than he really is. Only a little fun is poked at the doctor of physic, who knows his Galen and Avicenna somewhat better than the Bible, and who values gold as a cordial of especial worth.

Clergy

It is not until he comes to the clergy that Chaucer's gentle irony develops into a rich vein of satire. There is the utterly charming prioress, so tender-hearted that she would weep over a mouse in a trap, delicate and lovely, with manners to grace the royal court. The motto on her brooch is *Amor vincit omnia*, and we are left to wonder whether the reference is to the love of God. The monk fit to be an abbot is a great hunter and a

thorough man of the world, not at all like a fish out of water when away from his cloister. "A lord ful fat and in good poynt," he has nothing monastic about him except his clothes. The friar is more the professional ecclesiastic, with his power of hearing confessions and solemnizing marriages—but what an ecclesiastic! He is a strong, handsome devil, light-spoken and clever. He has a good stock of presents for young wives. He can sing and play. He knows hosts and tapsters much better than beggars and lepers. He enjoys the *entrée* into all the more substantial homes of the country. He hears confession full sweetly and grants pleasant absolution with easy penance, for he can judge of repentance through the sinner's generosity.

For many a man so harde is of his herte  
 He may nat wepe althogh hym soore smerte.  
 Therefore, instede of wepyng and preyeres,  
 Men moote yeve silver to the poure freres.

Chaucer presents two other clerical rascals, the summoner and the pardoner. The one was a sort of bailiff who served notices on people to appear before the ecclesiastical court—an occupation that gave unlimited opportunities for scandal-mongering and blackmail. The loathsome representative in the prologue is the profession at its worst. The pardoner has already been encountered in *Piers Plowman*. Chaucer's example is an effeminate with a voice "as smal as hath a goot." Yet he is good at his job of selling indulgences, and he also deals in relics: a pillowcase made from Our Lady's veil, a piece of sail from St. Peter's fishing boat—"and in a glas he hadde pigges bones." With this stuff he makes more in a day than an honest priest can get in a year.

And thus with feyned flaterye and japes  
 He made the person and the peple his apes.

To balance these uncomplimentary pictures, we are shown two very worthy men of the church. The famous clerk of Oxford is the poverty-stricken scholar who has obtained no benefice, but who does not care, as long as he possesses a score of books on Aristotelian philosophy. And the poor parson is all that he should be. He has not hired out his parish and gone to London to find easy money. Instead, he preaches the Gospel to the people, visits the sick and needy in rain and storm, and shares his meager income with the poor.

He waited after no pompe and reverence,  
 Ne maked him a spiced conscience;  
 But Christes loore and his apostles twelve  
 He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe.

Con-  
 tinental  
 literature  
 in the  
 fifteenth  
 century

It is quite obvious why Chaucer's popularity has never waned from his day to our own. While lacking the rugged strength of *Piers Plowman*, the *Canterbury Tales* have never been surpassed for graceful, witty narrative. More could not be expected from a poet who sought merely to entertain. And Chaucer was infinitely superior to the contemporary writers of the other western countries. Those of France, led by Froissart and Eustace Deschamps, slavishly followed the traditions of the thirteenth century, composing endless verses after the old models and never approaching their excellence. Germany could offer even less. Somewhat more remarkable work was being produced by Spanish authors, but in general they were satisfied with imitations of Italian, French, and Provençal originals, and among them no single literary genius emerged to rank with those mentioned in the preceding pages. In the fifteenth century conditions became even more unfavorable throughout most of western Europe. France, which had earlier been the cultural center of the Latin world, fell into appalling disorder, and before long England shared the same unhappy fate. Although the island kingdom had to wait for the Tudors to enjoy a noteworthy revival, France under Louis XI once more achieved glory in the field of letters as well as in that of politics.

François  
 Villon

Of the two illustrious French writers who flourished in the later fifteenth century, Philippe de Commines has already been considered.<sup>15</sup> The other was François Villon, one of the great lyric poets of all time and one of the world's most famous characters. Originally his name seems to have been François de Montcorbier. Born in Paris in 1431, he was, by the death of his father, early left to the care of his mother, a worthy woman but illiterate. What saved François from living and dying in obscurity was the fact that he was adopted by a well-to-do relative, Guillaume de Villon, who was a chaplain attached to the church of Saint-Benoît near the Sorbonne. Henceforth the boy lived with Villon and was known by his name. Thanks to his generosity, furthermore, François received a good education, first

<sup>15</sup> See above, pp. 638 f.

in a grammar school of the ordinary type and then in the university, where he became a bachelor in 1449 and a master in 1452.

He was destined never to obtain ecclesiastical preferment. The young master, in fact, had already developed the roistering habits which were to prevent his ever holding an honored position in either church or state. The discipline of the university, never very strict, had suffered from the general confusion of the kingdom. Paris, like the countryside, was filled with bands of thieves and cut-throats, and the students were often no better. Villon found in the taverns a more congenial society than in the cloister of Saint-Benoît; and the spiders, he tells us, spun their webs over the bed where he was supposed to be sleeping. To this early period belonged his brief love affair with Catherine de Vaucelles, which ended in his being soundly thrashed by a successful rival. Otherwise the girls whom he celebrated were chance acquaintances of the streets. In 1455, while in the company of one such person, he was stabbed by a priest named Sermaise. In defense, Villon struck him with a stone and killed him. Then at the barber's,<sup>16</sup> where he went for first aid, he was foolish enough to give a false name. There was a police investigation and Villon hurriedly left Paris. Within a year his friends had cleared his name before the authorities and he returned to his old lodgings. But in the meantime he had apparently joined the Coquillards, a gang of professional robbers, in whose jargon he wrote a number of ballads.

A series of housebreakings now occurred, ending in the theft of a considerable sum from the College of Navarre. Villon was implicated through the blabbing of a drunken comrade and was ordered under arrest. So once more he left the city in haste. He had only time to finish a last will in verse, the poem known as the *Petit Testament*. Posing as a victim of love, he makes a number of humorous bequests: his fame to Guillaume de Villon, his heart to the girl who had spurned him, his right of preferment to certain canons of Notre-Dame, his sword to a friend who is to pay the sum for which it is now in pawn. But while he is writing, he hears the bells of the Sorbonne, and the sound brings to mind all the scholastic mummary in which he has been so long engaged. The thought paralyzes his brain and he goes

The *Petit  
Testament*

<sup>16</sup> At this time barbers also acted as surgeons.

to bed. Already famous in student circles as a writer of clever ballads, Villon gained wide renown through the *Petit Testament*, and while exiled from the capital he enjoyed the hospitality of various princes. Yet he seems to have continued thieving as an avocation, and the summer of 1460 found him in a dungeon of the bishop of Orléans. Just then, according to the usual custom, Louis XI celebrated his accession by releasing prisoners on his triumphal procession throughout the kingdom. And as the king chanced to come in the right direction, Villon again found himself at liberty. Returning to Paris, he wrote the *Grand Testament*, the work that constitutes his title to immortality.

The  
*Grand  
Testament*

He begins with a bitter song against the bishop who threw him into jail; then he turns to bless Louis XI. May he live to be as old as Methuselah and have twelve children, all sons! This theme brings him to the story of King Alexander and the thief—and so to himself. He is now thirty and has little to show for the years but disillusionment.<sup>17</sup>

My time of youth I do bewail,  
That more than most lived merrily,  
Until old age 'gan me assail,  
For youth had passed unconsciously.  
It wended not afoot from me,  
Nor yet on horseback. Ah, how then?  
It fled away all suddenly  
And never will return again.

He is left with no money and little learning. Even love has lost its savor. If he had applied himself to study, he might have a chance to sleep warm in his old age. Instead he wasted his time with boon companions—and what has become of them?

Where are the gracious gallants now  
That of old time I did frequent,  
So fair of fashion and of show,  
In song and speech so excellent?  
Stark dead are some, their lives are spent;  
There rests of them nor mark nor trace;  
May they in heaven have content;  
God keep the others of His grace!

Of the rest some are beggars; some, on the other hand, are great

<sup>17</sup> The following quotations are from John Payne's translation; there are various editions.

lords, who drink noble wines and eat grand meats every day. Himself, he has had no such luck. He is descended from poor folk, whose tombs bear no crowns or scepters. There is only one consolation.

When I of poverty complain,  
 Ofttimes my heart to me hath said,  
 "Man, wherefore murmur thus in vain?  
 If thou hast no such plentihead  
 As had Jacques Cœur,<sup>18</sup> be comforted:  
 Better to live and rags to wear  
 Than to have been a lord, and dead,  
 Rot in a splendid sepulchre."

Yet want follows on his track and death comes after. His father has long been gone; his mother, as she well knows, must soon go. His turn will come. There is no escape. Even the fairest of the fair go the way of all flesh. So he writes on that hackneyed theme his *Ballad of Dead Ladies*—surpassingly beautiful, though little more than a list of names and the refrain, *Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?*<sup>19</sup> After similar poems to the lords of old time, Villon inserts in the testament his very famous *Complaint of the Fair Armoresse*. Then the *Double Ballad of Good Counsel* strikes a livelier note, giving to young men the vain advice of keeping away from the girls—"Good luck has he that deals with none."<sup>20</sup> And he adds the jingling verses that celebrate the speech of the Parisian women.

Prince, give praise to our French ladies  
 For the sweet sound their speaking carries;  
 'Twixt Rome and Cadiz many a maid is,  
 But no good girl's lip out of Paris.

Eventually, with a solemn invocation and a legal preamble, he comes to the testament proper—an appealing combination of humor and tender seriousness—as in the lovely prayer to the Virgin which he bequeathes to his mother, herself unable to write. At the end he provides a mock epitaph for himself, asking that he be buried in a nunnery and that the great bells of Notre-Dame be rung for his funeral! Like the life of the poet,

<sup>18</sup> A merchant of Bourges, famous for his wealth.

<sup>19</sup> See Rossetti's translation, "But where are the snows of yesteryear?"

<sup>20</sup> This and the following quotations are from the incomparable translations of Swinburne.

the *Grand Testament* is a continuous alternation of the grim and the gay.

Last years      None of Villon's good resolutions were kept. In 1462 he was again in prison. Let out on bail, he became involved in another stabbing affray and was sentenced to be hanged. It was on this occasion that he characteristically wrote two poems, one a coarse jest and the other a touching appeal on behalf of himself and his fellow convicts.

Men, brother men, that after us yet live,  
 Let not your hearts too hard against us be;  
 For if some pity of us poor men ye give,  
 The sooner God shall take of you pity.  
 Here are we five or six strung up, you see,  
 And here the flesh that all too well we fed  
 Bit by bit eaten and rotten, rent and shred,  
 And we the bones grow dust and ash withal;  
 Let no man laugh at us discomforted,  
 But pray to God that he forgive us all.

Yet his fame saved him from the gallows. Banished from Paris, he disappeared and no one knows when or where he died. He was the last and greatest singer of the Middle Ages. Subsequent generations invented new refinements of language; they could invent no greater art.

### 3. THE BEGINNINGS OF HUMANISM

The Ren-  
 aissance  
 in Italy      It was once fashionable among historians to say that the Renaissance began the Modern Age, and to attribute the beginning of the change to the revival of classic study in Italy. Few today would try to defend such a thesis. Chronologically, it cannot be applied to Europe as a whole, for in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the new learning was virtually restricted to Italy. From the standpoint of economic, social, and political history, the generalization is of little if any value. As already noted, the development of the important states and their respective institutions can be explained without reference to it at all; and the opening of the New World was the result of commercial expansion rather than of new styles in education. Even when limited to the field of arts and letters, the concept of a Renaissance cannot be taken too absolutely. If that term is given its literal meaning of "rebirth," it is hardly applicable to the

emergence of Italian literature. The same truth applies with equal force to English literature in the fourteenth century. There was a very real French Renaissance under Louis XI, but it had no connection with a revival of classic study. That in the later Middle Ages Italy produced a brilliant civilization with many original features none can deny, and it has become so familiar as Renaissance civilization that a change of name would be foolish. Nevertheless, before any rebirth is taken for granted, it will be well to see precisely what the cultural innovations of the Italians were. Aside from vernacular literature, which has already been examined, these innovations were principally in two fields, education and the fine arts. Eventually they were carried into all western Europe and thence into the New World. The present sketch cannot follow the process to its culminating stage. All that is presented here is an introduction to the subject, emphasizing the relationship between the older and the newer developments and leaving the details for treatment in other books.

As far as education was concerned, the effect of the Italian Renaissance may be best explained not as the creation of a new system, but as the concentration of interest upon a neglected phase of the old system. During the entire Middle Ages there had, of course, never been a moment when the Latin writers of antiquity were not admired and studied. There had been periods when scholarship sank to a very low ebb, but each time decline was followed by recovery. The revival under Charlemagne, narrow as it was in scope, had permanent results in the organization of schools, the improvement of handwriting, and the preservation of the classics.<sup>21</sup> That of the twelfth century was more of a general Renaissance, for it involved not only an enhanced interest in Latin letters, but also the recovery of many Greek authors, the introduction of wholly new sciences from the Arabic and many original developments, both intellectual and æsthetic.<sup>22</sup> The achievements of that age were never lost; they remained of fundamental importance for the later culture of Europe. In particular, they constituted the structure in which fourteenth-century Italians made certain alterations. As the universities grew up under the dominance of the church, which was chiefly concerned with practical religion, they came to devote their principal attention to theology, seeking by dialectical argumentation to

Scholastic  
education  
and its  
critics

<sup>21</sup> See above, pp. 221 f.

<sup>22</sup> See above, pp. 415 f.



combine and reconcile an incongruous mass of Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew writings. This was an essentially idealistic program, quite in line with ecclesiastical tradition, and it culminated in the monumental work of St. Thomas Aquinas, who in one grand logical system subordinated all human knowledge to the dictates of the Christian faith.

There were, however, a number of scholars who, without denying the authority of the church, decried the overemphasis of dialectic in the schools. The group of humanists,<sup>23</sup> loyal to the principles of the ancient grammarians, advocated a more thorough study of classical literature. The group of scientists, mainly inspired by Arabic authors, urged a greater concentration of effort on mathematics and experimentation. The group of mystics, citing a host of venerable authorities, deplored the extension of rationalism throughout the whole domain of Christian truth and denounced the tendency to make theology a matter of argument rather than of faith. Of the first group, once eloquently represented by John of Salisbury, little was heard in the thirteenth century. The second group, on the other hand, gained considerable strength under the ardent leadership of the Oxford Franciscans, Grosseteste and Bacon. And the third group was always prominent, especially outside the universities.<sup>24</sup> Inevitably, as the organized church of the thirteenth century weakened and broke in the fourteenth, those who objected to the official régime of education gained in prestige. The dissenters, of course, never fell into three mutually exclusive camps; but in general it may be said that the cause of mysticism became identified with religious reform, that of science was disputed in the leading universities, and that of humanism was triumphantly advocated by Petrarch and his disciples.

Duns  
Scotus  
(d. 1308)  
and  
William  
of Ockham  
(d. 1349)

We have seen how apostolic poverty became the subject of violent controversy between the Franciscan order and the papacy. Meanwhile the Friars Minor also continued their feud with the Dominicans by directing an offensive against the teachings of Aquinas and his followers, known as the Thomists. In the early fourteenth century the leaders of this campaign were Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, both of them Franciscans educated at Oxford and Paris. The former was more a mystic than a sci-

<sup>23</sup> See above, p. 429. The humanist was one who studied *literæ humaniores*, that is to say, the "more humane" or secular literature of Greece and Rome.

<sup>24</sup> See above, pp. 519, 679 f.

entist and more a critic than a systematic theologian. For his skill in dialectic he was called the *Doctor Subtilis*, and he achieved great fame by developing the thesis that such doctrines as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul cannot be proved by reason. Logically carried out, this argument tended to deny the possibility of reconciling the Christian religion and the Aristotelian metaphysic. The Scot, however, died prematurely in 1308 and within a few years his work was largely superseded by that of Ockham.

That illustrious scholar revived the discussion over universals and particulars by reexamining the whole subject of human knowledge.<sup>25</sup> Accepting the dogmas of the church as matters of divine revelation, Ockham discarded the rationalized theology of the schools as resting on false presuppositions. General ideas, he declared, have in themselves no absolute truth. One idea we accept because it follows from another already held. But what is the origin of the latter? Its validity must depend on the extent to which it faithfully represents the objects of experience. This was to challenge not only the teachings of Aquinas, but all rationalism that preferred logic to observation. It was an approach to the very threshold of what we call scientific thought, and momentarily it encouraged some very promising developments in the schools. Although many were profoundly shocked by Ockham's revolutionary doctrine and antagonized by his later quarrel with the pope, his influence dominated the foremost Parisian masters of the later fourteenth century. Turning their attention to mathematics and the physical constitution of the universe, they vaguely anticipated many of the views that were later to be demonstrated by Galileo and other great physicists of his age. Then, with the growing anarchy in church and state, the universities fell into decay. Academic discussion lost all originality and degenerated into a meaningless war of words among rival scholastic factions.

In Italy, meanwhile, the intellectual leaders were being drawn into the field of humanistic study. The example was set by Petrarch, a man of strange contradictions. We have seen how, in his younger days, he won merited fame by his sonnets in the vernacular. Subsequently he affected great disdain for the vulgar tongue and wrote only what he intended for classical Latin.

Petrarch  
and  
humanism

<sup>25</sup> See above, pp. 661 f.

Although many of his poems reveal a fine appreciation of the contemporary world and an ardent love for Italy, in his *Letter to Posterity* he expressed the wish that he might have been born in any age other than his own. He was a clergyman, spent a number of years as a hermit, and wrote books on religion. Yet he showed no understanding of Dante's Christianity, devoting himself by preference to secular literature and the pursuit of glory. By way of extenuation, it may be said that Petrarch was a poet, swayed rather by variable emotions than by a keen intelligence. Like Jean Jacques Rousseau of the eighteenth century, he was a man of illogical enthusiasms possessed of an uncanny ability to inspire disciples with a sort of religious fervor.

Despite Petrarch's profession of Christianity, his fundamental attitude toward life seems to have been that of a pagan. The essence of his humanism, at any rate, was to break with ecclesiastical tradition and to study the works of antiquity for their own sake. Unlike the orthodox scholar of the earlier period, the humanist gloried in the æsthetic delight that came to him through the reading of the classics. It may be gravely doubted that all the men and women who had studied these writings during the centuries since the triumph of Christian education had failed to have such emotional reactions. Many of them—even the most eminent doctors—must have enjoyed their Ovid and Vergil, but it was not conventional for them to advertise the fact. Once the inhibition was lifted, humanism gained rapid headway. The cities of Italy, with their wealthy, pleasure-loving aristocracy and their state-endowed schools, were natural centers for the encouragement of secular arts and letters. Under the patronage of rival despots and merchant princes, the collecting, interpreting, and imitating of ancient authors became a veritable craze.

Petrarch's own accomplishments were relatively mediocre. He had a very imperfect knowledge of the Latin classics and no knowledge of Greek at all. Scorning the barbarism of the schoolmen, he sought to model his style on Cicero and Seneca, producing a mass of affected discourses and epistles which today nobody cares to read except as a matter of historical research. Although the learning of his time contained much that was stupid or inadequate, much of it deserved more than a disdainful gesture. Along with the scholastic theology, Petrarch condemned all original advance in law, mathematics, and the natural sciences.

## THE ADVANCE OF SECULAR CULTURE 713

By rejecting both the vernacular and the contemporary Latin as a medium of literary composition, he made it impossible for his disciples to be other than antiquarians.<sup>26</sup> And his admiration for past ages was a matter of emotional reaction rather than of historical appreciation. His denunciation of Aristotle rested on a real understanding neither of Platonism nor of philosophy in general. In the eyes of his contemporaries, however, Petrarch's shortcomings were more than made up for by his enthusiasm. His love for ancient literature was sincere and made a host of converts, among whom was Boccaccio. That sprightly author, having come to repent the cynicism of the *Decameron*, for a time thought to enter a monastery, but was persuaded by Petrarch to take up humanistic study instead—a strange parody on the conversion of St. Jerome.<sup>27</sup> Like his friend, Boccaccio thenceforth devoted himself to the classical languages. His last years were spent in an effort to learn Greek.

In the course of the hundred years following the death of Petrarch the humanists rapidly gained control of various Italian universities. In the last decade of the fourteenth century pupils of Petrarch were made professors of rhetoric at Padua and Florence, and in the latter place a new chair of Greek was established. Thus emerged the classical education which was destined eventually to oust scholasticism from the schools of Europe in general. That was the work of many centuries. Long before the new system spread beyond the Alps, its standards had been set by Italian masters. With the passage of time, scholarship became more critical and students of Greek and Latin were provided with adequate grammars, dictionaries, and manuals of all sorts. At the same time the rage for the new learning led to the building of great classical libraries, to fill which eager collectors searched far and wide for the precious remains of antiquity. The result was the rediscovery of many forgotten books. Petrarch was delighted to find various works of Cicero which had previously been unknown to him. Boccaccio was thrown into transports by a neglected manuscript of Tacitus at Monte Cassino. But the most successful of all the humanist explorers was the Florentine, Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459). In St. Gall, Fulda, Cluny, and other monasteries he unearthed Quintillian, Lucretius,

Humanism  
after  
Petrarch

<sup>26</sup> See above, pp. 443 f.

<sup>27</sup> See above, p. 99.

Columella, and various other authors. Practically all the ancient Latin writings that are known to us were soon brought before the eyes of eager Italians, who often failed to remember that for every treasure which they had brought to light they had to thank some obscure "barbarian" of the previous age.

As far as the Greek classics were concerned, the humanists merely had to import them from Constantinople and other nearby cities where they had been readily available for many centuries. The followers of Petrarch were not, of course, the first westerners to study the language. It had never entirely disappeared in southern Italy and since the twelfth century it had been learned by a number of famous schoolmen, such as Grosseteste and Bacon. It had not, however, been regularly taught in the schools, where the ordinary master was content to read in translation his New Testament, Aristotle, Euclid, Galen, or Ptolemy. Now, as Greek literature came to be valued for its own sake, the great masterpieces of Hellenic prose and verse were brought within the scope of a liberal education. This was in truth the opening of a new world of thought, but many generations were to pass before such works could be appreciated. At first the average humanist was quite as uncritical as the scholastic; he merely shifted his adoration from one set of authorities to another and tended indiscriminately to admire everything antique, either Greek or Latin. Like every fad, humanism was by some carried to an absurd extreme. Despising all that was modern, they pretended to be Romans and even went through the motions of reviving pagan worship. How such affectation gradually gave way to a more sensible attitude toward the contemporary world; how many writers, instead of discarding the vernacular, sought merely to bring it under a classical influence; and how an improved scholarship eventually produced a better understanding of ancient history must be left for discussion elsewhere.

Humanism and the printing press From the facts already examined, it may be seen that humanism was an æsthetic revival. That is to say, its essence lay in the appreciation of literature as a form of artistic expression. The typical humanist of the earlier period was primarily interested neither in philosophy nor in science. When these subjects again came to absorb the attention of scholars, it was not so much through the influence of humanism as through a return to the attitude of men like Roger Bacon and William of Ockham. Nor

could the movement launched by Petrarch be expected to encourage mechanical invention. There was only one new process which has ever been attributed to its influence—that of printing. Since the close of the fifteenth century it has been hotly disputed whether the honor should go to Gutenberg of Mainz or to Coster of Haarlem. What is perhaps of greater importance in the present connection is to make clear just what the invention was. Paper, introduced into western Europe by the Arabs in the twelfth century, gradually came into general use for book-making, and with the new material the practice known as xylography was likewise developed.<sup>28</sup> This was the printing of designs by transfer of ink from carved wooden blocks. Very commonly the woodcuts were inserted in spaces left by the scribe in the manuscript, but occasionally lettering was added to explain the picture, and by an easy extension an entire book might be printed from blocks, one carved to represent each page. What came in the fifteenth century was therefore the invention not of printing, but of metal type cast from molds—too obvious an improvement to require lengthy comment. Perfected about the middle of the century, the new art spread very rapidly, so that presses were working in practically every country of Europe long before 1500.

It has often been stated that the demand for books created by the humanists led directly to the invention. Yet the first books to be printed were Bibles, psalters, and scholastic texts, rather than editions of the classics. Furthermore, the earliest type to be used was that called Gothic, a reproduction of the decorated hand popular in the later Middle Ages. This the humanists disliked, and it was largely due to their influence that printers came to perfect what we know as Roman type, which was actually copied from the Carolingian minuscule.<sup>29</sup> That the appearance of the printing press revolutionized the intellectual history of mankind is another familiar statement. If taken very generally to apply to a long, slow process, it is true enough. It does not, however, hold for the fifteenth century alone. Although the invention was welcomed as a useful method of producing books at a low cost, it hardly induced anybody to read what he would not otherwise have read and it left the ideas of the masses quite unchanged.

<sup>28</sup> See above, p. 209.

<sup>29</sup> See above, p. 227.

## 4. THE NEW STYLES IN THE FINE ARTS

Later  
Gothic  
architec-  
ture

To a considerable degree the history of the arts in the later Middle Ages parallels that of letters. In the one field as in the other the fading influence of the church permitted the rapid encroachment of a secular spirit. This change can be readily perceived on both sides of the Alps. To the north, although Gothic remained the dominant style of architecture, its great age was past. Simpler forms of construction were superseded by the style known in England as Decorated and in France as Flamboyant, from the flame-shaped traceries that characterized it (see Figure 12). Striking effects were occasionally obtained by the use of such ornamentation, but on the whole it tended rather to obscure than to enhance the structural beauty of the framework. In France, especially, the decay of ecclesiastical architecture was only too evident. On the other hand, the communes of Flanders and Brabant then began to raise the splendid civic buildings that yet give them such charm and distinction. Particularly noteworthy are the cloth halls of Bruges and Ypres,<sup>30</sup> the belfry of Ghent, the *hôtels de ville* of Louvain and Oudenarde, and the clustering gild houses of the Grand' Place in Brussels—one of the loveliest spots in Europe (see Plates XII, XIII).

Gothic  
sculpture  
and  
painting

The statuary of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries tells the same story. The radiant beauty of the earlier French sculpture yielded to a naturalism that was better suited to portraits than to expressions of the ideal. So it was characteristic of the later age that some of the best artists were employed in designing memorial statues to the departed great. Even the characters of sacred history came to be represented as persons subject to violent emotion. The pathos of life and the tragedy of death, so prominent in the literature of the fifteenth century, became favorite themes for the sculptor and for the designer of pictures. Painting had been used to enrich ecclesiastical buildings in three principal ways: stained glass, decorated wooden panels for altarpieces, and fresco—the application of color to plaster while it is still fresh. This method hardly found a place in the Gothic church, for the simple reason that the latter normally had no plastered walls. And little remains of such work as was applied to other structures north of the Alps. Stained glass, as we have seen, was a highly specialized art which declined with Gothic archi-

<sup>30</sup> The latter was burned during the war of 1914-18.

ecture after 1300. The painting of pictures on wooden panels, however, proved more congenial to the artists of the fourteenth century, and in that pursuit they naturally followed the traditions of the illuminators. From a very early time it had been customary to adorn the finest manuscripts not only with colored letters, but also with marginal illustrations. Such miniatures might deal with almost anything. When drawn by a devout monk, they would normally be symbolic, like most of the carvings on the façade of a cathedral. But when a psalter or other book of devotion was made for a wealthy prince, it might be decorated with realistic scenes from everyday life. This art flourished especially at the courts of Charles V and his brothers, reaching its height of excellence in the *Book of Hours* illuminated for the duke of Berry (see Plate XIV).

Shortly afterwards the famous altar-piece at Ghent was painted by the brothers van Eyck, Flemings in the service of the Burgundian duke. Begun by Hubert, the panels were finished by John, who produced many other great pictures and finally died in 1441. Earlier paintings of this sort, like those on parchment, had normally been in tempera, i.e., color mixed with egg or gum. The van Eycks, on the contrary, used oils; and although they did not invent the process, they were the first to perfect it. John's work, in particular, was remarkable for its realism. Less successful than his brother in presenting the ideals of religion, he was a consummate portrait-painter. In that respect, indeed, he has never been surpassed—as may be realized by any one who examines his *Man with the Pink*, or the figures of the donors in his larger compositions (see Plate XIV). He also excelled in the painting of domestic interiors, reproducing with amazing skill the textures of rich fabrics, the sheen of polished wood and metal, the brilliance of a sunny window, or the depth of reflection in a mirror. Effects like this had never before—at least in Christian Europe—been achieved by smearing paint on a flat surface. And the art was essentially a native product of northern France, untouched by classic influence.

The  
brothers  
van Eyck

Italy, meanwhile, had witnessed remarkable developments not only in painting, but also in sculpture and architecture; and to some degree they were inspired by antique models. Inevitably, as the educated classes were swept by a craze for Roman writings, they also became mad over the remains of Roman art. Coins, statuettes, vases, and other works of antiquity were enthusiasti-

Italian  
architec-  
ture



cally sought by collectors. On all sides great men built classical museums to rival their classical libraries. To the eyes of the humanist everything mediæval was barbarous, "Gothic"—and thus the northern architecture obtained its name as a term of reproach. Reacting against the exuberant and generally meaningless decoration of the imported style,<sup>31</sup> Italians sought to restore their buildings to classical purity. Actually, they knew nothing of Greek architecture and they had little familiarity with the Roman except through such monuments as triumphal arches and the Colosseum, which had never been examples of perfect taste.<sup>32</sup> So the Italian ambition was often satisfied by the addition of superficial details, such as columns, pilasters, entablatures, and carved decorations copied from sarcophagi.

Brunel-  
leschi  
(1377-  
1466)

The first great church to be affected by the new movement was the cathedral of Florence—a semi-Gothic building on which Brunelleschi placed a dome some three hundred feet high. Constructed like a cupola on an octagonal base, it was a fine and original work, though hardly Roman in spirit.<sup>33</sup> Even more characteristic of the Italian Renaissance were magnificent civic buildings and private residences, and the best of them—like the Medici palace at Florence or the Cancelleria at Rome—owe their beauty rather to graceful proportions than to superficial decoration (see Plate XIII). As yet the Venetians still remained loyal to their ancient traditions, but in the Lombard cities the classic forms were rather dreadfully mixed with the Gothic—as, for example, in the Certosa at Pavia. What is called Renaissance architecture thus began as a very haphazard style, resting on no logical development of structural principles. It was not until later that Italian architects sought to formulate a complete system, and then they adopted the mathematical theory of the Roman Vitruvius, whose work had been rediscovered by Poggio. The results were not altogether happy, but the continuation of the story down to the present must be left to others.

Italian  
sculpture

On the whole, the Italian contributions in sculpture and painting were infinitely superior to those in architecture, and as late as the fifteenth century the former owed little to classic art. Perhaps it was fortunate that there were no antique pictures and at first very few antique statues to be copied. The first of the

<sup>31</sup> See above, p. 485.

<sup>32</sup> See above, p. 124.

<sup>33</sup> See above, p. 125.

Renaissance sculptors was the Florentine Ghiberti, whose masterpiece was the set of bronze doors for the baptistery of the local cathedral (see Plate XVI). These magnificent reliefs, to be sure, reveal touches of Roman ornamentation. Yet the total effect is anything but classical; the scenes from the Old and New Testaments are infused with religious feeling, while much of the decoration is naturalistic. In the work of the slightly younger Donatello this latter characteristic is even more prominent. His statues of saints, instead of being attempts to represent ideal Christian virtues, are individual men and women, modeled from life with all their peculiarities and imperfections. His angels are smiling, robust children. His David, the first nude of the Italian Renaissance, is a graceful Florentine boy who—it must be admitted—looks more like a dancer than the slayer of Goliath (see Plate XVI). Such an artist was of course a master of portraiture. His equestrian statue of the mercenary captain Gattamelata—another first of its kind—set a new standard for the representation in bronze of a horse as well as a rider. This was the admirable beginning of an art that was to attain fresh glories under the hands of Michelangelo.

Ghiberti  
(d. 1455)  
and  
Donatello  
(d. 1466)

The history of Italian painting is a much more complicated subject, and one that can here be no more than touched. In this connection the man whose art laid the foundations for the splendid advance of the following centuries was Giotto, the compatriot and friend of Dante. Breaking with Byzantine tradition, he covered walls with frescoes that sought to tell a story by direct expression in pictures. Such, for example, are his famous decorations at Assisi, which deal with the life of St. Francis.<sup>84</sup> Each scene is in itself a dramatic episode, portrayed with what was intended for realism. Giotto's skill in drawing was limited, but the pictorial value of his compositions made him the founder of a new school (see Plate XV). The rest of the century saw little more than imitations of Giotto; then appeared at Florence the astonishing Masaccio. Although he died at the age of only twenty-seven, he gave a fresh impetus to the languishing art of fresco. The vivid realism of his pictures became the inspiration of all the great Florentine masters that followed (see Plate XV). The subsequent development of Italian painting lies beyond the scope of the present sketch; but it should be mentioned that a disciple of Masaccio's and a pupil of Donatello's was Verrocchio

Italian  
painting:  
Giotto  
(d. 1336)  
and  
Masaccio  
(1401-28)

<sup>84</sup> They are in the great church of St. Francis; see above, p. 485.

(1435-88), who in turn helped to develop the surpassing genius of Leonardo da Vinci.

The character of Renaissance art

These few facts should at least indicate that the rich vein of naturalism in Renaissance art was independent of all classic influence and had its source rather in the later Gothic art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The assertion by Italian writers that everything fine in their civilization was derived from the antique must be explained as a mere outburst of uncritical enthusiasm. No one who compares the works produced in France, Flanders, and Italy during the later Middle Ages can fail to perceive the truth. It was not that the Italians borrowed from the Flemings, or vice versa; both groups started with a common inspiration and up to a certain point progressed together. It is more than coincidence that the van Eycks were of the same generation as Masaccio, Ghiberti, and Donatello. Whatever may be decided concerning mutual influence between the two schools, it must be admitted that the Flemings led the way in realistic portraiture and in landscape painting. Furthermore, it was they who perfected the technique of mixing colors with oil. The Italians, on their side, excelled in fresco and in pictorial composition, no matter what medium was used. From them all Europe came to learn the art of making a picture as distinguished from that of making a portrait. And in this respect, of course, there is much to be considered besides the representation of nature.

Ecclesiastical influence remained strong, in that it provided themes for the artists; but the old religious feeling that had remained a dominating force with Dante, and even with Giotto, all but died under their successors. The art of fifteenth-century Italy, although much of it was produced for ecclesiastical patrons, was secular in spirit. The madonnas and saints of the great masters were hardly less fleshly—though more fully clothed—than their Roman gods and goddesses. The Italian theorists were right in at least one particular: Renaissance art was like the antique in its paganism. And eventually, as the artists became more expert, they were better able to appreciate the finer qualities of classic work and to draw from it lessons of value for their own age. Nevertheless, there was no rebirth of art, no sharp contrast between that said to be of the Middle Ages and that said to be of the Renaissance. The latter term, on careful analysis, becomes quite meaningless, except as it may be taken to designate the artistic developments peculiar to Italy in the fifteenth century.

## CONCLUDING NOTE

TO BREAK the study of European history at the close of the fifteenth century is in some respects undesirable. There was at that time no revolutionary change in economic conditions, either for the better or for the worse. The division arbitrarily cuts across a steady development of institutions and culture that had been under way for several hundred years. It awkwardly separates many a noteworthy advance in commerce, politics, arts, and letters from its logical culmination. Restricting our attention to the western kingdoms, we may say that, with the decay of feudalism and the emancipation of the peasantry, the state was now tending to become a national organization. But no such transformation is discernible in eastern Europe. Even the new departure marked by the emergence of absolute monarchy in France, England, and Spain can easily be exaggerated. To evaluate the despotism of Francis I, Henry VIII, and Ferdinand the Catholic is impossible without taking into account the long constitutional evolution that preceded. Similar objection, however, may be offered to closing a sketch of European history in any century, and the end of the fifteenth has its advantages as a terminal point. The Protestant Reformation was actually a great revolution that came to have permanent effects on both church and state. A matter of such far-reaching importance should hardly be taken up at all unless the discussion can be carried into the later seventeenth century. And the opening of the New World introduces a complicated story that is equally hard to interrupt.

Accordingly, when practical considerations demand a separation of European history into a more recent and a less recent period, one might as well accept the time-honored differentiation of mediæval and modern. These terms are quite arbitrary. Taken to imply more than a chronological division, they become utterly confusing. If, for example, it is stated that, to be truly mediæval, a country must be dominated by manorial society, Flanders and Italy ceased to be mediæval as early as the thirteenth century. If devotion to the ideals of the Roman church is held to be the essence of mediævalism, a large section of humanity is still mediæval. If mediæval men were perpetually fascinated by abstract theories, there were very few mediæval men

among the feudal aristocracy. As a matter of fact, ideas and habits and institutions varied enormously in the Middle Ages, as they have in other periods of history. To call one of them mediæval is not to describe it. Why, indeed, should a single word be expected to give positive information concerning people and customs throughout a thousand years? A volume that treats of the ensuing age can at most cover a little over four centuries. Yet who will attempt to define modernity or to expound the content of the "modern mind"? The search for the first modern man is as vain as that for the last man of antiquity. The deluded enthusiast who undertakes such a quest will inevitably lose himself in the Middle Ages.

As historical students, we cannot hope to isolate the typically mediæval or the typically modern; we can only try to explain what happened in a given period. This book covers a dozen centuries. Any one that works through them and advances into the subsequent centuries will find all the great developments continuing after 1500. Without serious distortion of the truth, the Protestant revolt might be described as another chapter in the history of mediæval religion; the opening of the New World as another chapter in the history of mediæval commerce. There was similar continuity in political history. The dominant issue in the European diplomacy of the sixteenth century was the struggle between the dynasties of Valois and Habsburg. But this struggle began as the perpetuation of an old feud inherited by the Habsburgs along with the Burgundian dominions. When, later, they secured the crown of Spain by marriage alliance, they were merely following a policy that had been used by the dukes of Burgundy to secure the Netherlands and by the Habsburgs themselves to secure Bohemia. It was, in fact, the ancient policy of every feudal house in Europe.

Time and again it will be found that the great questions over which the powers of Europe have fought long and bloody wars had their roots deep in the Middle Ages. The World War of 1914-18 was no exception. The rival claims of the Serbs, Bulgars, Rumanians, and Greeks in the Balkan peninsula; their common antagonism to the Turks; the three-cornered dispute of Austrian, Czech, and Magyar; the policy of Russia in all such matters—these are only a few of the international problems that carry one back to the days of John Hus or earlier. The Polish question of today, involving the isolation of East Prussia by a

Slavic corridor running down the Vistula, is fundamentally as it was when the Teutonic Knights ruled at Königsberg. The recent establishment on the Baltic of Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania marks a return to precedents of the thirteenth century. Virtually all national traditions that yet divide Europe into hostile camps were by origin mediæval.

The importance of the mediæval period is even clearer in the field of constitutional history. The oldest of the modern European states, France and England, both appeared in the time of the Hundred Years' War with perfected institutions that were retained in essentials for the next four hundred years. Other practical developments of the Middle Ages were equally significant, such as the organization of towns with free tenure of land and rights of self-government. The economist notes as matters of outstanding interest the mediæval contributions in business administration, capitalistic enterprise, and banking. The mariner's compass, gunpowder, and printing—whoever may have been responsible for their invention—had come into use throughout Europe long before 1500.

Of all the centuries in European history since the fall of Rome, the twelfth seems to be the one in which civilization made the greatest relative advance. Its three glories were the revival of learning that gave birth to our first universities, the perfection of a splendid native art, and the development of a rich vernacular literature. Since the twelfth century three systems of law have been continuously studied in Europe: the Roman law as a subject derived from antiquity, the canon law and the English common law as entirely new creations. Aside from law, the twelfth-century revival of learning embraced the study of Latin literature and, more indirectly, of Greek and Arabic works also. It involved a striking advance in science. Much of the contemporary medicine and astronomy, to be sure, was later discredited by the revolutionary discoveries of the seventeenth century; but we still use, alongside Greek geometry and trigonometry, mediæval arithmetic and algebra. For beauty and originality the monuments of the Romanesque and Gothic styles, the feudal epics, the songs of the troubadours, and the cycles of romances rank among the world's masterpieces. Many of these works, like the memoirs of Joinville and Commynes, the stories of Boccaccio, and the immortal verse of Dante, Chaucer, and Villon, have held an unfailing charm for countless generations of readers.

among the feudal aristocracy. As a matter of fact, ideas and habits and institutions varied enormously in the Middle Ages, as they have in other periods of history. To call one of them mediæval is not to describe it. Why, indeed, should a single word be expected to give positive information concerning people and customs throughout a thousand years? A volume that treats of the ensuing age can at most cover a little over four centuries. Yet who will attempt to define modernity or to expound the content of the "modern mind"? The search for the first modern man is as vain as that for the last man of antiquity. The deluded enthusiast who undertakes such a quest will inevitably lose himself in the Middle Ages.

As historical students, we cannot hope to isolate the typically mediæval or the typically modern; we can only try to explain what happened in a given period. This book covers a dozen centuries. Any one that works through them and advances into the subsequent centuries will find all the great developments continuing after 1500. Without serious distortion of the truth, the Protestant revolt might be described as another chapter in the history of mediæval religion; the opening of the New World as another chapter in the history of mediæval commerce. There was similar continuity in political history. The dominant issue in the European diplomacy of the sixteenth century was the struggle between the dynasties of Valois and Habsburg. But this struggle began as the perpetuation of an old feud inherited by the Habsburgs along with the Burgundian dominions. When, later, they secured the crown of Spain by marriage alliance, they were merely following a policy that had been used by the dukes of Burgundy to secure the Netherlands and by the Habsburgs themselves to secure Bohemia. It was, in fact, the ancient policy of every feudal house in Europe.

Time and again it will be found that the great questions over which the powers of Europe have fought long and bloody wars had their roots deep in the Middle Ages. The World War of 1914-18 was no exception. The rival claims of the Serbs, Bulgars, Rumanians, and Greeks in the Balkan peninsula; their common antagonism to the Turks; the three-cornered dispute of Austrian, Czech, and Magyar; the policy of Russia in all such matters—these are only a few of the international problems that carry one back to the days of John Hus or earlier. The Polish question of today, involving the isolation of East Prussia by a

Slavic corridor running down the Vistula, is fundamentally as it was when the Teutonic Knights ruled at Königsberg. The recent establishment on the Baltic of Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania marks a return to precedents of the thirteenth century. Virtually all national traditions that yet divide Europe into hostile camps were by origin mediæval.

The importance of the mediæval period is even clearer in the field of constitutional history. The oldest of the modern European states, France and England, both appeared in the time of the Hundred Years' War with perfected institutions that were retained in essentials for the next four hundred years. Other practical developments of the Middle Ages were equally significant, such as the organization of towns with free tenure of land and rights of self-government. The economist notes as matters of outstanding interest the mediæval contributions in business administration, capitalistic enterprise, and banking. The mariner's compass, gunpowder, and printing—whoever may have been responsible for their invention—had come into use throughout Europe long before 1500.

Of all the centuries in European history since the fall of Rome, the twelfth seems to be the one in which civilization made the greatest relative advance. Its three glories were the revival of learning that gave birth to our first universities, the perfection of a splendid native art, and the development of a rich vernacular literature. Since the twelfth century three systems of law have been continuously studied in Europe: the Roman law as a subject derived from antiquity, the canon law and the English common law as entirely new creations. Aside from law, the twelfth-century revival of learning embraced the study of Latin literature and, more indirectly, of Greek and Arabic works also. It involved a striking advance in science. Much of the contemporary medicine and astronomy, to be sure, was later discredited by the revolutionary discoveries of the seventeenth century; but we still use, alongside Greek geometry and trigonometry, mediæval arithmetic and algebra. For beauty and originality the monuments of the Romanesque and Gothic styles, the feudal epics, the songs of the troubadours, and the cycles of romances rank among the world's masterpieces. Many of these works, like the memoirs of Joinville and Commynes, the stories of Boccaccio, and the immortal verse of Dante, Chaucer, and Villon, have held an unfailing charm for countless generations of readers.



The traditional separation between the modern and the mediæval is not a distinction between the vital and the defunct. Many an institution that flourished after 1500 is today as dead as chivalry, while much from the Middle Ages remains a living heritage of the present.

Pepin, Mayor of the Palace  
(d. 714)

Charles Martel, Mayor of the Palace  
(d. 741)

Pepin I (751-68)

\* Charlemagne (768-814)

Carloman (768-71)

\* Louis the Pious (814-40)

(Italy etc.)

(Germany)

(France)

Lothair (840-55)

Louis the German (840-76)

\* Charles the Bald (840-77)

\* Louis  
(Italy)  
(855-75)

Charles  
(Provence)  
(855-63)

Lothair  
(Lorraine)  
(855-69)

Carloman  
(876-80)

Louis  
(876-82)

\* Charles the Fat  
(876-87)

\* Arnulf (887-99)

Louis the Child  
(899-11)

Louis II (877-79)

Louis III<sup>1</sup>  
(879-82)

Carloman  
(879-84)

Charles, the  
Simple  
(898-923)

Louis IV (936-54)

Lothair (954-86)

Louis V (986-87)

\* Crowned Emperor,

TABLE I. THE CAROLINGIANS.

5

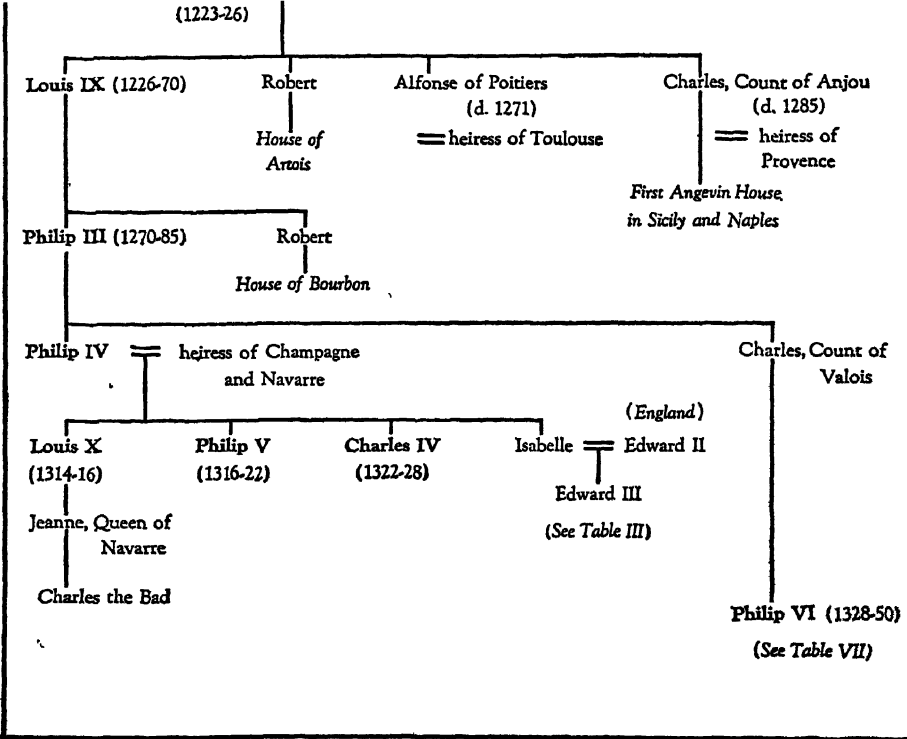


TABLE II. THE CAPETIAN HOUSE UNTIL 1328.

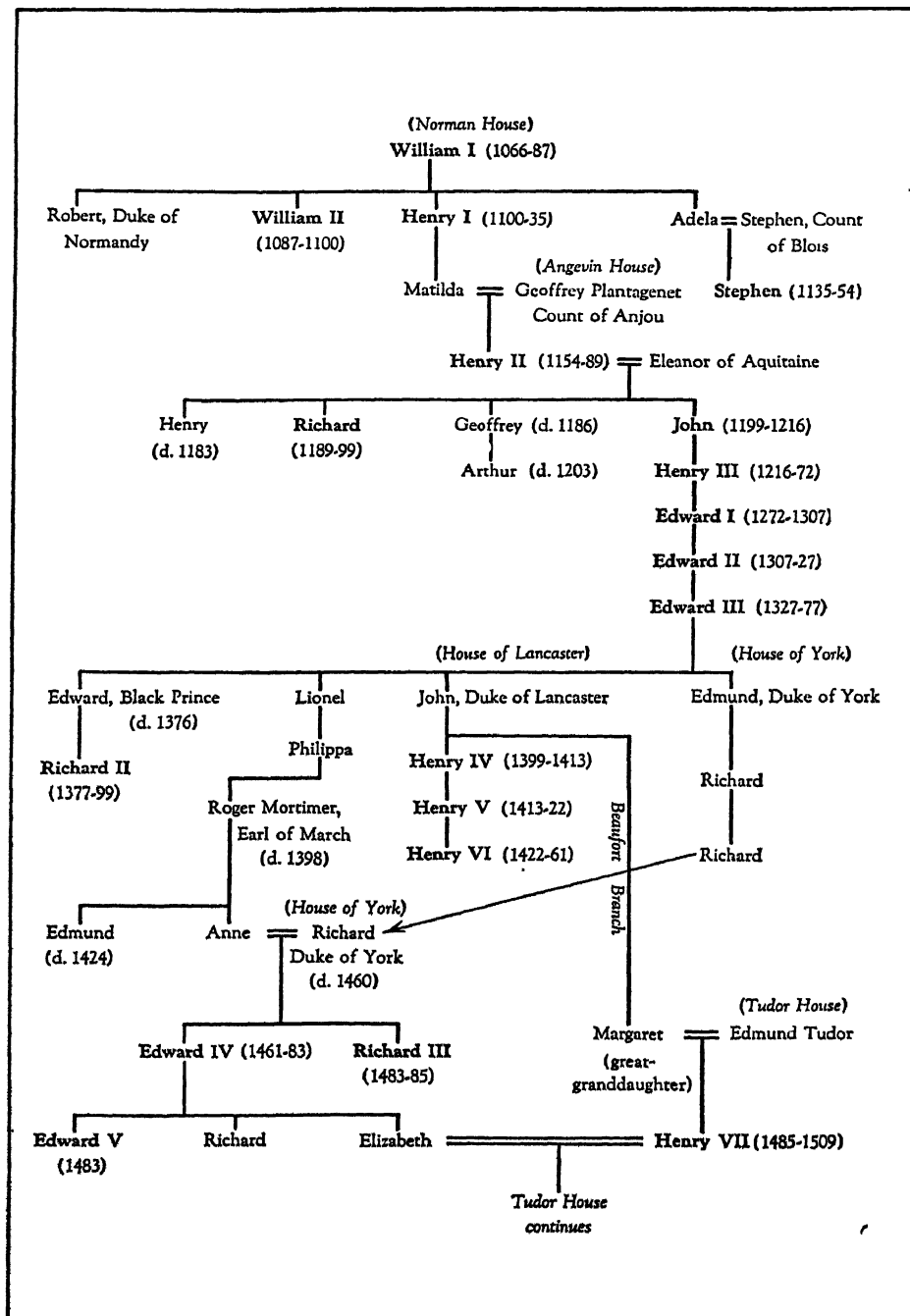


TABLE III. KINGS OF ENGLAND (1066-1485).

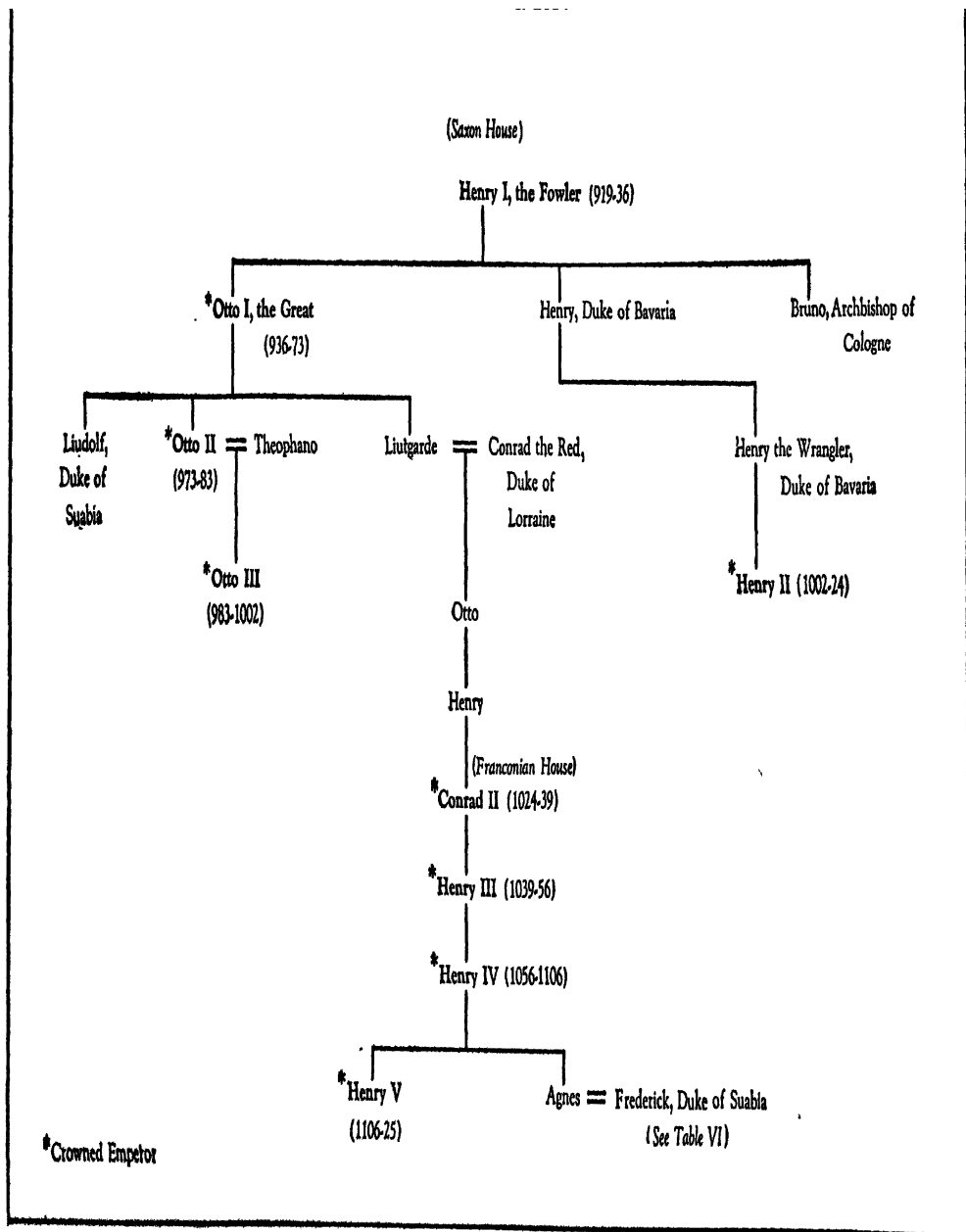
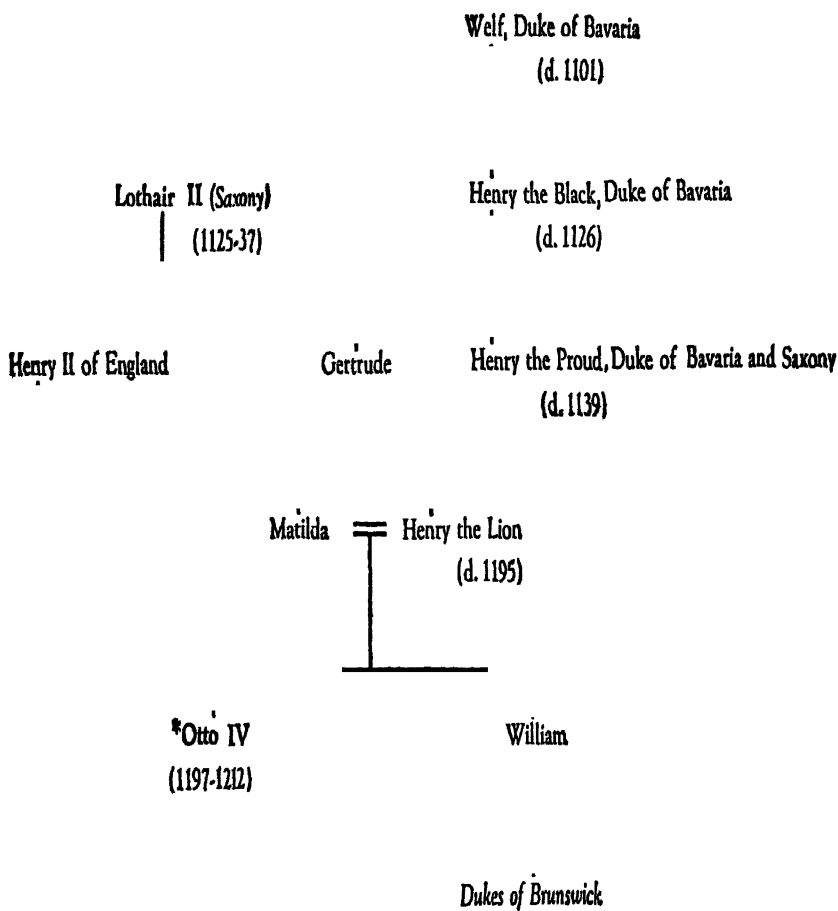


TABLE IV. SAXON AND FRANCONIAN KINGS OF GERMANY.



\* Crowned Emperor

TABLE V. THE HOUSE OF GUELPH.

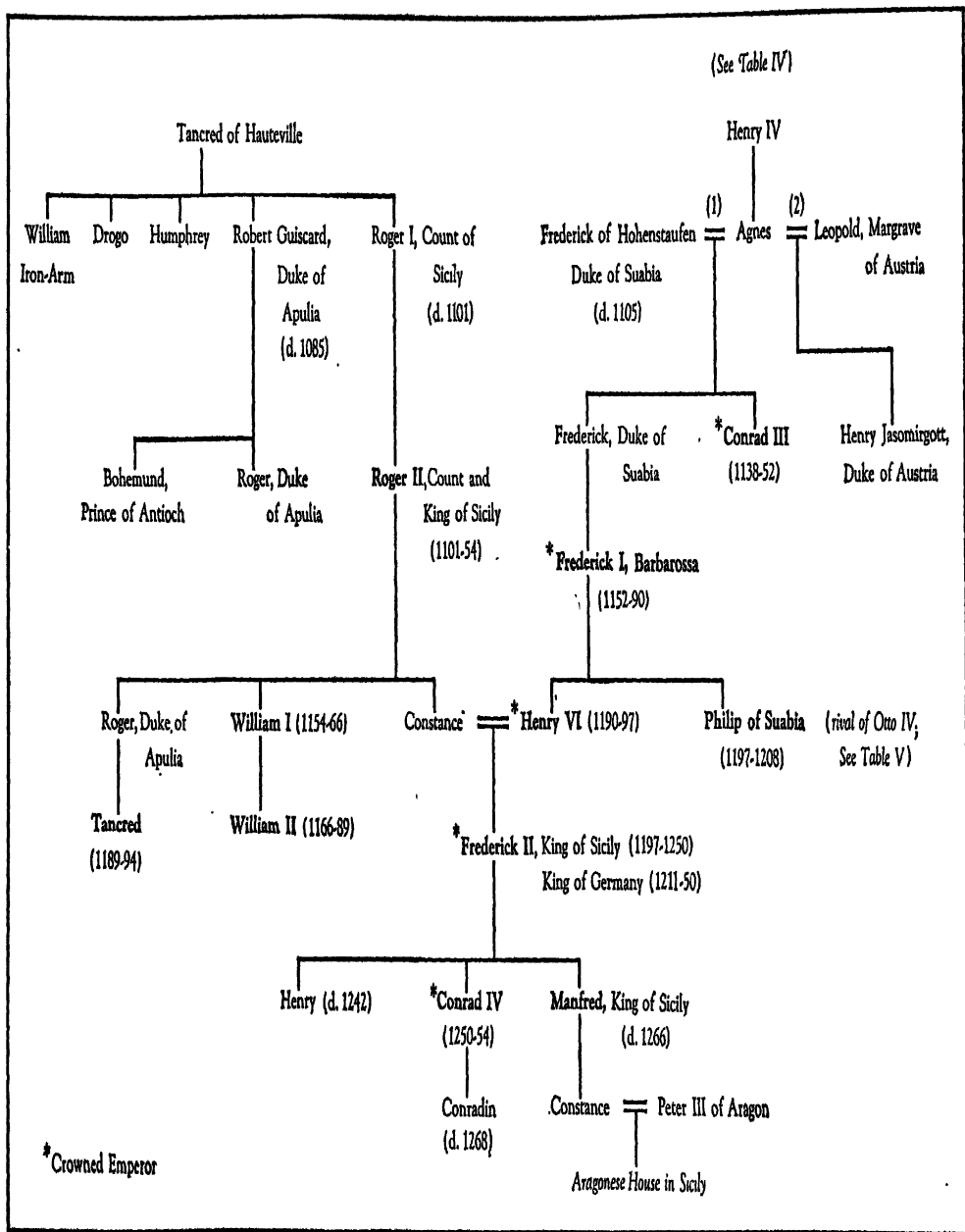


TABLE VI. THE HOUSES OF HAUTEVILLE AND HOHENSTAUFEN.

(See Table II)

Philip VI (1328-50)

John (1350-64)

(Second Capetian House  
in Burgundy)

Charles V (1364-80)

Louis, Duke of  
Anjou

John, Duke of  
Berry

Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy  
(1361-1404)

= heiress of Flanders

Second Angerlin  
House in Naples  
and Provence

John the Fearless (1404-19)

= heiress of Holland, etc.

Charles VI (1380-1422)

Louis, Duke of Orleans  
(d. 1407)

Philip the Good (1419-67)

Charles VII (1422-61)

(England)  
Catherine = Henry V  
(See Table III)

House of Orleans

Charles the Rash (1467-77)

Mary = Maximilian  
of Austria  
(See Table VIII)

Louis XI (1461-83)

Charles, Duke of Berry  
(d. 1472)

Anne de Beaujeu

Charles VIII = Anne of Brittany  
(1483-98)

TABLE VII. THE VALOIS HOUSE (1328-1498).



(House of Luxembourg)

Henry VII (1308-13)

John, King of Bohemia  
(d. 1346)

Rudolf of Habsburg (1273-91)

Albert I (1298-1308)

(Dukes of Austria)

Charles IV (1346-78)

Louis the Great, King  
of Hungary

Frederick (opposed Louis  
of Bavaria)

Albert II

Wenceslas (1378-1400)  
King of Bohemia  
until 1419

Sigismund = Mary  
(d. 1437)  
King of Hungary (1387)  
King of Germany (1410)  
King of Bohemia (1419)

Albert III

Albert IV

Leopold, slain at  
Sempach (1386)  
Ernest

Elizabeth = Albert V (II)  
(1438-39)  
Ladislas

Charles the Rash

Frederick III (1440-93)

Mary of Burgundy = Maximilian (1493-1519)  
(See Table VII)

House of Habsburg  
in Austria, Bohemia,  
Netherlands, Spain, etc.

Abbreviations for  
**CHRONOLOGICAL CHARTS**

K...King

D...Duke

C...Count

P...Pope

AB...Archbishop

B...Bishop

d...died

m...married

† ..murdered

✕ .. Battle of

		THE BARBARIANS	ROMAN EMPIRE WEST EAST	THE CHURCH	ARTS AND LETTERS
300					300
		Franks and Alamans on the Rhine	Diocletian (284-305) Constantius (d. 306) Constantine (306-37) * Milvian Bridge (312)	Galerius (d. 311) Licinius (d. 324)	Porphyry
10		Goths, Sueves, and other Germans on the Danube	Constantine (d. 337)	Grant of toleration to Christians	10
20				Arian heresy	20
30				Council of Nicaea (325)	30
40			Founding of Constantinople Sons of Constantine (337-61)	St. Anthony of Egypt St. Pachomius (d. 346)	40
350					350
		Invasion of Europe by the Huns	Julian (361-63) Valentinian I (364-75) Valens (364-78)	P. Damasus I (366-84)	
60					60
70					70
		* Adrianople (378)	Gratian (375-83) Valentinian II (383-92) Arbogast Theodosius I (d. 395)	St. Basil (d. 379) P. Siricius (384-99)	Vulgate of St. Jerome Gothic Bible of Ulfilas (d. 383)
80		The Visigoths in the Empire			80
90		Rise of Alaric	Honorius (395-423) Arcadius (395-408)	St. Ambrose (d. 397)	Ammianus Marcellinus Ausonius
400					400

#### FOURTH CENTURY

THE BARBARIANS IN THE WESTERN PROVINCES							ROMAN EMPIRE		THE CHURCH	ARTS AND LETTERS
							WEST	EAST		
Franks, Alamans, Burgundians, Vandals, and Sueves cross the Rhine into Gaul Angles and Saxons invade Britain Visigoths enter Gaul (412); Ataulf, Galla Placidia							Honorius (d. 423) Stilicho (d. 408) Sack of Rome by Alaric (410)	Arcadius (d. 408) Theodosius II (408-50)	P. Innocent I (402-17)	Claudian Symmachus, Capella Macrobius
Visigoths under Wallia conquer Spain from the Vandals, who cross into Africa under Gaiseric (429)							Valentinian III (425-55) Aëtius (d. 454)		Nestorian heresy	St. Jerome (d. 420) St. Augustine (d. 430) City of God
ANGLO-SAXONS	VANDALS	VISI-GOTHS	FRANKS	ALAMANS	BURGUNDIANS					
Britain	Africa Kingdom under Gaiseric (d. 477)	South Gaul and Spain	North Gaul Salian and	Alsace and upper Danube	Rhone Valley					
		Theodoric								
			Ripuarian Kingdoms							
Permanent settlement begins										

FIFTH CENTURY

	BRITISH ISLES	SPAIN AND AFRICA	FRANKISH KINGDOM	ITALY	BYZANTINE EMPIRE	ASIA	ARTS AND LETTERS	
500	Continuation of Anglo-Saxon conquest	Vandals in Africa  Visigoths in Spain	Clovis (d. 511) Conquest of Aquitaine  Sons of Clovis (511-61)  Conquest of Burgundy Provence Alamania Bavaria Thuringia	Theodoric (d. 526)	Anastasius (d. 518)   Justin I (518-27)   Justinian (527-65)  Theodora  Belisarius  Narses	Renewal of the Persian offensive      Persistence of Nestorian and Monophysite (Jacobite) Churches	The <i>Salic Law</i>    Boëthius (d. 524) Cassiodorus  St. Benedict's reform of monasticism  Justinian's <i>Corpus Iuris Civilis</i>  Splendor of Byzantine architecture	500
10								10
20								20
30								30
40		Justinian's reconquest of Africa and part of Spain		Justinian's reconquest (535-53)				40
550								550
60	St. Columba (d. 597) at Iona		Grandsons of Clovis	Exarchate of Ravenna	Council of Constantinople (553)	Invasion of Europe by the Avars, who conquer the Slavs, Bulgars, and other peoples. To- gether they overrun the Balkan peninsula	Church of St. Sophia  Procopius	60
70				Lombard invasion under Alboin	Justin II (565-78)			70
80			Decline of Merovingian power	Political chaos	Tiberius II (578-82) Maurice (582-602)		Gregory of Tours (d. 594) Ecclesiastical History of the Franks	80
90	St. Columban (d. 615) to Gaul		Civil wars Austrasia vs. Neustria	P. Gregory the Gt. (590-604)				90
600	Mission of Augustine (597)	Visigoths recognize Roman Church		Extension of papal authority			Gregory the Great Pastoral Care Dialogues, etc.	600

# SIXTH CENTURY

	BRITISH ISLES	SPAIN AND AFRICA	FRANKISH KINGDOM	ITALY	BYZANTINE EMPIRE	THE ARABS	ARTS AND LETTERS	
600	Northumbria the dominant Anglo-Saxon kingdom	Byzantine loss of Spanish coast	Great-Grandsons of Clovis	Gregory the Great (d. 604)	Phocas (602-10)	Mohammed (d. 632)	Isidore of Seville (d. 636) <i>Etymologies</i>	600
10			St. Columban (d. 615)	Papacy remains strong	Heradius (610-41)	Preaching of Islam		10
20				Lombards split into many small prin- cipalities	Successful offensive against Persia (622-29)	The Hegira (622)		20
30				Byzantine control rapidly weakens		Caliphate Abu-Bakr (632-34) Omar (634-44) Conquest of Syria, Persia, Egypt.	The Koran	30
40			Dagobert (d. 639)		X The Yarmuk (636)	Othman (644-55)		40
650		Arab conquest of Egypt	Rois Faraments		Successors of Heraclius	Civil war		650
650			Mayors of the Palace		Collapse of the Byzantine Power	Ali (655-61)	Learning of the Irish monks	650
60					Losses: Syria Egypt North Africa Spanish coast Islands of the Mediterranean	Muawiya (661-80) Ommiad Caliphs at Damascus until 750	Illuminated manuscripts	60
70	Council of Whitby (664)	Arab campaigns in Tripoli and Tunis			Most of Italy	Further conquests in Asia and North Africa		70
70	Theodore of Tarsus B of Canterbury (669-90)				Interior of the Balkan penin- sula	Control of the Mediterranean		70
80								80
90		Arab conquest of North Africa	Willibrord's mission in Frisia		Defense of Asia Minor and Constantinople			90
700								700

# SEVENTH CENTURY

BRITISH ISLES	SPAIN AND AFRICA	FRANKISH KINGDOM	ITALY	BYZANTINE EMPIRE	THE ARABS	ARTS AND LETTERS
<p>Mercia the dominant Anglo-Saxon kingdom</p>	<p>Moslem conquest of Visigothic kingdom</p> <p>Moslem raids in Gaul</p> <p>X Tours (Poitiers) (732)</p>	<p>Pepin II, Mayor of Palace in Neustria and Austrasia (d. 714)</p> <p>Charles Martel M. of P. (714-41)</p> <p>Pacification of Aquitaine Burgundy Alamania Bavaria Thuringia Frisia</p> <p>Pepin III, M. of P. (741-68)</p>	<p>Liutprand, K. of Lombards (712-44) Attacks Ravenna</p> <p>P. Gregory II (d. 731) Condemns Iconoclasts</p> <p>P. Gregory III (d. 741) Appeals to Charles Martel</p> <p>Aistulf, K. of L. (750-56)</p>	<p>Revival of Byzantine strength</p> <p>Leo III (717-40) Iconoclastic Controversy</p> <p>Schism between East and West</p> <p>Successors of Leo III</p> <p>Palace revolutions</p>	<p>Siege of Constantinople fails (718)</p> <p>Fall of Omniads (750)</p>	<p>Bede (d. 735) Ecc. Hist. of the English People</p> <p>Learning of Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks brought to continent by missionaries</p> <p>St. Boniface (d. 754) Organizer of the church in Germany</p>
<p>Viking raids along coasts of Britain and Ireland</p>	<p>Omniad Emir at Cordova later styled Caliph</p> <p>Morocco becomes independent</p>	<p>Pepin, K. by support of Pope (751)</p> <p>Conquest of Septimania</p> <p>Charlemagne (768-814)</p> <p>Conquest of Lombard Kingdom and Saxony</p> <p>Reconquest of Bavaria</p> <p>Defeat of Avars</p> <p>Creation of Eastern Marches</p> <p>Spanish March</p> <p>Imperial coronation (Xmas, 800)</p>	<p>Takes Ravenna</p> <p>P. Stephen II (752-57)</p> <p>Frankish intervention</p> <p>Donation of Pepin Papal States</p> <p>P. Hadrian I (772-95)</p> <p>Desiderius (757-74) last of the Lombards kings</p> <p>P. Leo III (795-816)</p>	<p>Religious strife</p> <p>Bulgarian wars</p> <p>Loss of all authority in Rome and North Italy</p>	<p>Abbasid Caliphs at Bagdad until 1258</p> <p>al-Mansur (754-75)</p> <p>Harun-al-Rashid (786-809)</p>	<p>Beginnings of Arabic Science</p> <p>Translations from Greek Libraries</p> <p>Saracenic architecture and decorative arts</p> <p>Carolingian Revival of Learning</p> <p>Alcuin (d. 804)</p> <p>Paul the Deacon</p>

# EIGHTH CENTURY

BRITISH ISLES	CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE			BYZANTINE EMPIRE	THE ARABS	ARTS AND LETTERS
Wessex the dominant Anglo-Saxon kingdom	Charlemagne (d.814) Emperor The Frankish Kingdom at its height			Paralysis under weak emperors	Harun-al-Rashid (d. 809)	Einhard (d.840) Hrabanus Maurus
Increase of viking raids throughout British Isles	Louis the Pious (814-40) Emperor Weakening of the monarchy			Rise of Bulgaria	al-Mamun (813-33)	John the Scot Carolingian minuscule
	Civil war among sons					Romance Languages; <i>lingua romana</i>
	(Emperor) Charles the Bald (840-77) Lothair (840-55) Louis the German (840-76) Peace of Verdun (843)			Michael III (842-67)	Disintegration of Arab Empire under rival caliphs and independent governors	Arabic culture Literature Music Fine Arts Commerce Geography
Viking conquests: E. Ireland W. Scotland	FRANCE	CENTRAL KGDM.	GERMANY			Mathematics Astronomy Medicine, etc.
Most of Northumbria, Mercia, and E. Anglia	Viking raids Settlement of Normandy Feudalization of kingdom Great duchies	Division among three sons (855) P. Nicholas I (858-67) Extension of papal power	Viking raids  Increasing power of dukes	Viking raids down Dnieper to Black Sea; Russians  Macedonian House		Hunain al-Kindi al-Farghani al-Khwarizmi
Alfred, K. of Wessex (871-901)	Emperor (875) Various Carolingians (877-85) Charles the Fat	{ Italy Provence Lorraine } Charles the Fat Emperor (881)	Charles the Fat (876-87)	Basil I (867-86) Religious peace between East and West	Sea power of African emirs  Capture of Sicily, Crete, Sardinia, Corsica, and Balearic Is.	
Defense of Wessex, which comes to include all territory south of Thames; also W. Mercia	Odo of Paris (888-98)	Deposed (887)	Arnulf (887-99) Emperor (896)	Bulgarians under Boris I (852-84) accept Greek Christianity	Continuous raids along European coasts	Slavic alphabet invented by Cyril, missionary to Bohemia Adopted by Bulgarians
	Political disintegration. Civil wars. Invasions of vikings, Hungarians, and Saracens.					

## NINTH CENTURY



	ENGLAND	FRANCE (SPAIN)	GERMANY	ITALY	BYZANTINE EMPIRE	THE ARABS	ARTS AND LETTERS	
900	Alfred (d. 901)	Charles the Simple (898-923)	Louis the Child (899-911)	Degradation of the Papacy	Macedonian Dynasty	Caliphs at Bagdad become puppets controlled by military chieftains	Continuance of Arabic culture	900
10	Edward the Elder (901-25)	Recognizes duchy of Normandy (911)	Conrad I (911-18) Virtually powerless	Control by local nobles Marozia	Hungarians in Pannonia		al-Razi	10
20	Conquest of Danelaw begun	Acquires Lorraine	Saxon House Henry I (919-36)		Bulgarian Empire under Tsar Simeon (d. 927), then decline		al-Farabi	20
	Aethelstan (925-37)	Kings of the Parisian House (922-36)	Reorganizes kingdom Acquires Lorraine				Ibn al-Haitham al-Battani	
30	Conquest of Danelaw completed		X The Unstrut (933)	Rise of Venice as an independent city state			Anglo-Saxon literature	30
40	The Kingdom of England	Kings of the Carolingian House (936-87)	Otto the Great (936-73)		Rise of Russia under Princes of Kiev		Beowulf	40
			Lordship of Arles and Bohemia		Attack Constantinople and overrun Bulgaria		Song of Malden	
50		Hugh the Great C. of Paris (d. 956)	Redistribution of duchies	Assumes crown of Italy (951)			Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Translations	50
950		SPAIN	X The Lech; final Hungarian defeat	P. John XII (955-63)	Byzantine offensive in Cilicia			950
60	Edgar (959-75)	Caliphate of Cordova at height	Imperial coronation (962) The Holy Roman Empire		Nicephorus Phocas (963-69)	Byzantine conquest of Antioch and Cyprus	Revival of Learning under Otto I	60
70	Lordship of all Britain	Five Christian states in north: León, Castile, Navarre, Aragon, Catalonia (County of Barcelona)	Byzantine alliance Otto II (973-83) m. Theophano	Fails to conquer South Italy	John Tzimiskes (969-76) Defeats Russians		German schools and scholars	70
80	Aethelred (979-1016) Weak reign		Otto III (983-1002)	Imperial dreams Neglect of Germany	Basil II (976-1025)		Scientific works of Gerbert (Silvester II)	80
90	Renewal of Danish raids Danegeld	Hugh Capet (987-96)	Hungary Christian under Stephen I (997-1038)		Russians under Vladimir (d. 1015) accept Greek Christianity		Study of the abacus	90
1000		Robert (996-1031)	Poland under Boleslav I (992-1025)	P. Silvester II (999-1003)			Beginnings of Russian culture	1000

## TENTH CENTURY

	ENGLAND	FRANCE (SPAIN)	GERMANY	ITALY	BYZANTINE EMPIRE	ARABS AND TURKS	ARTS AND LETTERS	
1000	Aethelred (d.1016)	Robert (d.1031)	Otto III (d.1002)	Silvester II (d.1003)	Basil II (d.1025) conquers Bulgaria after long war	Emergence of Seljuk Turks	Continuance of Arabic culture	1000
10	Danish Conquest Canute (1016-35) K. of Denmark and Norway	The Capetian kings accomplish little, but the French nobility is very active, especially the Normans in Italy and England	Henry II (1002-24) Slavio offensive led by Poland German control of Bohemia	Papacy weakens Cluniac Reform			Avicenna (d.1037) al-Biruni (d.1048)	10
20	Peace with Scots; cession of Lothian		(Franconian House) Conrad II (1024-39)	Pisa and Genoa lead offensive against Moslems on the sea				20
30	Sons of Canute (1035-42)	Henry I (1031-60)	Acquires Kingdom of Arles (1032)	Rise of the Lombard Communes	Decline under successors of Basil II; Macedonian house ends (1056)	Turkish advance into Persia		30
40	Edward Confessor (1042-66) (Son of Aethelred)	French recruits make possible Christian offensive in Spain Noteworthy expansion of	Henry III (1039-56) Reform of church Control of papacy Height of the H.R.E.	Four German popes P. Leo IX (1048-54) Reform councils				40
1050	Advancing influence of Normans	León, Castile and Aragon	Henry IV (1056-1106) Regency to 1066	Alliance with Normans	Final schism between East and West (1054)	Sultan Togrul Beg takes Bagdad (1055)	Revival of Culture in Western Europe	1050
60	Norman Conquest William I (1066-87)	Philip I (1060-1108)	Papal autonomy Cardinal College Robt. Guiscard D. of Apulia (1059-85)	P. Nicholas II (1058-61) P. Alexander II (1061-73)	Loss of South Italy	Alp Arslan (1063-72) Conquest of Persia and Armenia	Dialectic Nominalism vs. Realism	60
70	Introduction of feudal tenures French culture	X Barbastro in Spain (1065)	Saxon Wars Investiture Controversy	P. Gregory VII (1073-85) Canossa (1077)	Romanus IV X Manzikert (1071)	Malik Shah (1072-92) Conquest of Asia Minor and Syria	Roscellinus Berengar of Tours	70
80	Domesday Book William II (1087-1100)	Almoravids to Spain X Zallaca (1086)	Constant civil war	Henry IV takes Rome (1084)	Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118) Norman War		Development of Romanesque Architecture	80
90	Anselm, Ab of Canterbury	Council of Clermont (1095); Crusade proclaimed	Henry abandons Italy	P. Urban II (1088-99) C. Roger (d.1101) conquers Sicily	FIRST CRUSADE 1096 Arrival at Constantinople 1098 Capture of Antioch 1099 Capture of Jerusalem		Bayeux Tapestry Song of Roland	90
1100								1100

# ELEVENTH CENTURY

	ENGLAND	FRANCE (SPAIN)	GERMANY	ITALY	EASTERN EUROPE	THE TURKS	ARTS AND LETTERS	
1100	Henry I (1100-35) Coronation Charter Takes Normandy from brother	Philip I (d. 1108)	Henry IV (d. 1106)	Roger II (1101-54) Inherits Sicily	Alexius Comnenus (d. 1118)	Results of crusade: Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem	Omar Khayyam Idrisi	1100
10	Improved central government.	Louis VI (1108-37)	Henry V (1106-25)		Recovers coast of Asia Minor	County of Edessa	Averroës	10
20	Exchequer Privileged boroughs	Consolidation of Capetian domain Communes and privileged towns Sugar (d. 1151)	Continued strife between Papacy and Empire Investiture Controversy ended by Concordat of Worms (1122)	Acquires Apulia and Calabria	War with crusaders over Antioch Comneni continue until 1185	Princ. of Antioch County of Tripolis Templars and Hospitallers	Rise of the Universities Scholastic theology Abelard Peter Lombard	20
30	Angevin alliance		Lothair III (1125-37)	K. of Sicily (1130)	Hungary remains strong; holds Croatia	Trade concessions to Pisa, Genoa, Venice	Canon Law Gratian	30
40	Stephen (1135-54) The Anarchy Angevin War	Louis VII (1137-80) Rise of Angevins Geoffrey Plantagenet	Guelf (G) vs. Hohenstaufen (H) (H) Conrad III (1138-52) (G) Henry the Lion	Anti-church agitation Arnold of Brescia Peter Waldo Cathari (Albigensians)	Poland weakens Intermittent German lordship Bohemia loyal, part of H. R. E.	Zangi, Gov. of Mosul takes Edessa (1144)	Revival of Roman Law Translations of Greek and Arabic science Adelard of Bath John of Salisbury	40
1150	son Henry II (1154-89) m.	Eleanor of Aquit. divorced (1152)	(H) Frederick Barbarossa, (1152-90)	P. Hadrian IV (1154-59) P. Alexander III (1159-81) Fall of Milan (1162)	Eastward expansion of Germans Slavic Marches Pomerania to Austria	Nur-ed-Din (1146-74) takes Damascus	St. Bernard Vernacular Lit. Chansons de Geste	1150
60	Constitutional reforms Common Law New taxes	SPAIN C. of Portugal recognized as K. by pope (1179) C. of Barcelona acquires crown of Aragon (1150)	Italian expeditions; conflict with papacy and communes	Lombard League X Legnano (1176)	Henry the Lion founds Lübeck		Lyrics of troubadours	60
70	† Becket (1170) Norman expansion in Wales		Old duchies broken up		Russia disintegrates	Saladin, Sultan of Egypt (1171-93)	Romances; Marie de France Chretien de Troyes	70
80	Irish conquests Wars with sons	Philip Augustus (1180-1223) acquires Picardy	Fall of Henry the Lion (1181) Sicilian alliance	Peace of Constance (1183)	Isaac II (1185-95)	Acquires Mosul, Aleppo, Damascus	Drama and music Icelandic sagas Cid; Goliards	80
90	Richard I (1189-99) Third Crusade (1189-92) Angevin-Capetian War		(H) Henry VI ('90-'97) Acquisition of Sicilian Kingdom	P. Celestine III ('91-'98)	Bulgaria again independent	Takes Jerusalem (1187) Third Crusade (1190-92) fails	Transition to Gothic Arts Architecture	90
1200	John (1199-1216)	Contest with pope over divorce	(G) Otto IV vs. (H) Philip of Suabia	P. Innocent III (1198-1216)	Alexius III (1195-1203)	Teutonic Knights	Sculpture. Stained glass	1200

## TWELFTH CENTURY

	ENGLAND	FRANCE	GERMANY	ITALY	EASTERN EUROPE	THE TURKS	ARTS AND LETTERS	
1200	John, (d. 1216) Loss of Normandy, etc. Quarrel with pope (1207-13)	Philip Aug. (d. 1223) Conquest of Normandy, Anjou, Poitou, etc.	Frederick II, K. of Sicily (1197-1250) Philip of Suabia (d. 1208)	Innocent III (d. 1216) Height of the Papacy Franciscan order Lateran Council (1215)	Fourth Crusade Capture of Constantinople (1204) Latin Empire (1204-61)	Rise of Mongols under Jenghis Khan (1206-27)	Perfection of Gothic Arts St Francis Villehardouin	1200
10	Magna Carta (1215) Henry III (1216-72) Minority to 1227	✗ Bouvines (1214)	Otto IV put out by Frederick II (1215) Emperor (1220)	P. Honorius III (1216-27) Dominican order Renewal of Lombard League	Maritime supremacy of Venice	Conquer all central Asia and Persia	Fabliaux Romance of Reynard	10
20	SPAIN James the Conqueror of Aragon (1213-76) takes Valencia Final union of León and Castile under Ferdinand III (1230) Takes Murcia, Cordova, Seville	Louis VIII (1223-26) Louis IX (1226-70) Blanche of Castile Regent to 1234 Secures half of Languedoc Constitutional advance Crusade (1248-54) disastrous	Crusade (1228-29) Sicilian Code Contest with Gregory IX Italian Wars Germany left to princes	P. Gregory IX (1227-41) Canon Law Papal Inquisition ✗ Cortenuova (1237)	Teutonic Knights in Prussia (1230) Union with Livonian order (1237)	Frederick II recovers Jerusalem Mongols conquer Russia; Kiev destroyed Fall of Jerusalem	Aucassin and Nicolette German poetry Nibelungenlied Walther von der Vogelweide	20
30				P. Innocent IV (1243-54)	Mongols invade Bohemia and Hungary	Louis IX's Crusade in Egypt	Robert Grosseteste	30
40			Conrad IV (1250-54) Disputed Election (1257) Interregnum until 1273	Manfred, Regent, then K. of Sicily (1258-66) P. Urban IV (1261-64) P. Clement IV (1265-68) Charles of Anjou K. of Sicily (1266-85)	Republic of Novgorod prosperous Michael Palaeologus (1261-82) Restored Byzantine Empire	Mongols end Caliphate of Bagdad (1258); checked in Syria by Mamelukes, who take Antioch (1268) Kublai Khan (1259-94) Marco Polo's travels	Vincent of Beauvais Albert the Great Thomas Aquinas Roger Bacon	40
1250	Edward I (1272-1307)	Philip III (1270-85) Secures all Languedoc	Rudolf of Habsburg (1273-91) Takes Austria from Ottokar of Bohemia Origin of Swiss Confederation (1291) Albert of Austria (1298-1308)	Ruin of Pisa Rise of Florence P. Martin IV (1281-85) Sicilian Vespers (1282) Island acquired by K. of Aragon P. Boniface VIII (1294-1303) Clerics Laicos (1296)	Bitter rivalry of Venice and Genoa for Black Sea Second Bulgarian Empire		University colleges Growth of naturalism in art	1250
60	Provisions of Oxford (1258) Simon de Montfort Barons' War (1264-65)	Peace with England (1259)						60
70								70
80	Conquest of Wales (1282-84) Statutes Scottish Wars Model Parl. (1295) ✗ Falkirk (1298)	Aragonese Crusade fails Philip IV (1285-1314) m. heiress of Champagne War with Edward I (1294-98)				Fall of Acre (1291) End of the original crusade	Joinville Romance of the Rose	80
90								90
1300								1300

### THIRTEENTH CENTURY

	ENGLAND	FRANCE	ITALY	GERMANY	EASTERN EUROPE	THE OTTOMAN TURKS AND THE BALKANS	ARTS AND LETTERS	
1300	Edward I (d. 1307) Conquers Scotland Edward II (1307-27)	Philip IV (d. 1314) { Estates General X Courtrai (1302) Trial of Templars (1307-14) Sons of Philip IV (1314-28) Law of Succession Valois House Philip VI (1328-50)	Unam Sanctam Anagni (1303) P. Clement V (1305-14) P. John XXII (1314-34) Contest with Franciscans and Louis of Bavaria Development of Canon Law Papal Taxation	Wars of Habsburg (H), Luxemburg (L), Wittelsbach (W) (L) Henry VII (1308-1313) son (W) Louis of Bavaria (1314-47) X Morgarten (1315) Growth of the Swiss Confederation Rise of the Hansa Independence of princes and Free Cities (L) Charles IV (1346-78)	Teutonic Knights Headquarters to Prussia (1309) John, K. of Bohemia (1310-46) Angevin House in Hungary (1309) Louis the Great (1342-82) also K. of Bohemia Founds U. of Prague	Osman (1299-1326) and his Turks capture Brusa Orkhan (1326-59) Takes Nicaea and Nicomedia Organizes state Serbian Empire under Stephen Dushan (1331-55) Decline of Bulgaria	Duns Scotus Pierre Dubois William of Ockham Marsiglio of Padua Italian Literature Dante (d. 1321) Divine Comedy Petrarch (d. 1374) Sonnets Boccaccio (d. 1375) Decameron Revival of Humanism Petrarch Development of Painting	1300
10	Robert Bruce K. of Scotland X Bannockburn							10
20	Scottish independence Edward III (1327-77)							20
30								30
40	Opening of the Hundred Years' War (1337) X Sluys (1340) X Crécy (1346)	Acquisition of Dauphiné	The Black Death					40
1350	The Black Prince X Poitiers (1356) Anti-Papal Statutes	John (1350-64) { Estates at Paris Etienne Marcel Jacquerie (1358) Victory of Charles V (1364-80) Foundation of absolute monarchy Du Guesclin Charles VI (1380-1422) Philip of Burgundy acquires Flanders (1384) Insanity of king Orleans vs. Burgundy	Revival of mysticism Brothers of the Common Life St. Catherine of Siena P. Gregory XI (1371-78) Returns to Rome The Great Schism (1378-1417) Clement VII (d. 94) Urban VI (d. 89) Boniface IX (d. 1404) Benedict XIII (1394-1417)	Abandons Italy Golden Bull (1356) Seven Electors War of Hansa with Waldemar of Denmark Peace of Stralsund (1370) Height of Hansa (L) Wenceslas (78-1400) Sigismund (brother) K. of Hungary (1387-1437) X Sempach (1386) Final Swiss victory Wenceslas deposed, keeps Bohemia	Revival of Poland under Casimir the Great (1333-70) Louis, K. of Poland (1370-82) also K. of Bohemia (1378-1419) Jagiello of Lithuania acquires Polish crown (1386) Union of Calmar (1397)	Turks enter Europe (1356) Murad I (1359-89) Takes Adrianople Conquers Bulgars X The Maritza (1371) Defeat of Serbs Vassalage of Byzantine Emperor (1381) X Kossovo (1389) Bayazid I (1389-1402) Hungarian Crusade X Nicopolis (1396)	Miniatures Flamboyant style of Gothic Secular architecture of Italy and Flanders English Literature Chaucer (d. 1400) Canterbury Tales Wycliffe's Bible Langland Piers Plowman	1350
60								60
70	The English all but driven from France Richard II (1377-99) Great Revolt (1381)							70
80								80
90	Growth of Lollardy Attempted royal absolutism Revolution							90
1400								1400

# FOURTEENTH CENTURY

	ENGLAND	FRANCE	ITALY	GERMANY	EASTERN EUROPE	THE OTTOMAN TURKS AND THE BALKANS	ARTS AND LETTERS	
1400	House of Lancaster Henry IV (1399-1413) Parliamentary government	Charles VI (d.1422) John of Burgundy (1404-19) † Orleans (1407) Civil War	Innocent VII (d. 1406) Gregory XII (1406-15)	(W) Rupert (1400-10) Preaching of Hus in Bohemia	Wenceslas, King of Bohemia (d. 1419) Sigismund K. of Hungary (d. 1437) † Tannenberg (1410)	✕ Angora (1402) Victory of Timur (d. 1405) Civil War	Pierre d'Ailly Jean Gerson	1400
10	Henry V (1413-22) ✕ Agincourt (1415)	Invades France † Burgundy (1419)	Council of Pisa (1409) Council of Constance (1414-18)	(L) Sigismund Hus burned (1415)	Decline of Teutonic Knights Sigismund, K. of Bohemia (d. 1437) Hussite War (1420-36) John Ziska (d. 1424)	Mohammed I (1413-21) Turkish recovery	Renaissance Arts Painting Van Eyck Masaccio (d. 1428)	10
20	Henry VI (1422-61) Regency of Gloucester and	Peace of Troyes (1420) Charles VII (1422-61) → Bedford Career of Jeanne d'Arc (429-31) Peace of Arras (1435)	Restoration of papal monarchy P. Eugenius IV (1431-47) Contest with Council of Basle	Council of Basle (1431-49) Religious peace with Hussites (1434) Germany and Bohemia to Habsburg house (1437)		Murad II (1421-51)	Sculpture Ghiberti (d. 1455) Donatello (d. 1466)	20
30				Frederick III (1440-93) Failure of Conciliar Movement			Architecture Brunelleschi (d. 1466)	30
40	Defeat in France	Restoration of Charles V's government	P. Nicholas V (1447-55) Papal triumph		Ladislas III, K. of Poland and Hungary slain at	Hungarian crusades; victories of Hunyadi	Dominance of Humanistic Study in Italy Poggio (d. 1459)	40
1450	Insanity of King Yorkist rising House of York Edward IV (1461-83)	Fall of Guienne End of Hundred Years' War (1453) Louis XI (1461-83)	Relapse of Roman Church under Renaissance popes	BURGUNDY Philip the Good (d. 1467) unites Netherlands	Revival of Russia under Princes of Moscow	✕ Varna (1444) Turks subdue all Balkans	Perfection of Printing Coster and Gutenberg	1450
60	Warwick the King-Maker Extermination of Lancastrians	League of Public Weal (1465) Péronne (1468) Royal absolutism acquires Burgundy, Provence, etc.	SPAIN Isabella of Castile m. Ferdinand of Aragon (1469) Latter inherits crown (1479)	War with Louis XI Charles the Rash (1467-77) Occupation of Alsace, Lorraine Defeat by Swiss	Peace of Thorn (1466) Polish dominance in Prussia	EXPLORATION Portuguese voyages under Prince Henry (d. 1460)	French Literature Commines Villon	60
70				Mary of Burgundy m. Maximilian son of Philip III (1477)				70
80	Richard III (1483-85) House of Tudor Henry VII (1485-1509)	Charles VIII (1483-98) Anne de Beaujeu Regent Charles m. to heiress of Brittany	Establishment of royal absolutism Conquest of Granada (1492)	Foundation of Habsburg greatness	Discovery of Senegal, Niger, etc. Diego Cam discovers Congo (1482) Diaz rounds Cape (1486) Columbus discovers America (1492) Vasco da Gama circumnavigates Africa (1498)		Witch Bull of Innocent VIII (1484) Malleus Maleficarum (1386)	80
90	Establishment of royal absolutism							90
1500								1500

# FIFTEENTH CENTURY

## SUGGESTED READINGS

In the following pages it will be convenient first to make a list of books that may be of use in connection with a number of chapters; then, under each chapter, to add other titles by way of supplement. Only a few of many valuable books on any one phase of mediæval history will be mentioned and, as a rule, readings will be suggested to illustrate specific points of interest. Students who desire more detailed information, especially with regard to books in foreign languages, are referred to the bibliographies and general histories noted immediately below.

### BIBLIOGRAPHIES

- Paetow, L. J. *Guide to the Study of Mediæval History*. New Edition. New York, 1931.  
Thompson, J. W. *Reference Studies in Mediæval History*. 3 pts. Chicago, 1925-30.

### ENCYCLOPEDIAS

- The Encyclopædia Britannica*. As far as mediæval history is concerned, the eleventh edition is superior to the fourteenth.  
Hastings, J. *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. Like the following two works, this is listed because it contains articles on many phases of mediæval thought.  
*The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Clearly presents the Catholic views.  
*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Written from the standpoint of Protestant scholarship.  
*The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Includes many good articles on the social and economic phases of mediæval civilization. Reaches as yet only the letter T.

### GENERAL MEDIÆVAL HISTORIES

- The Cambridge Medieval History*. Vols. I-VII. Cambridge, 1911-32. The best comprehensive survey of the mediæval period in English (one more volume is yet to appear, on the fifteenth century). The history is by a large number of writers, each of whom contributes a chapter or two in his own particular field. The work of course varies in excellence, but in general it gives a scholarly and up-to-date narrative of political events, together with a wide variety of essays on special subjects. Each chapter is provided with an exhaustive bibliography, placed at the end of the volume.

- Thompson, J. W. *The Middle Ages*. 2 vols. Second Edition. New York, 1932. A recent, interesting account, considerably fuller than the ordinary text.
- Periods of European History*. London, 1894 f. This series is almost exclusively a political history and is now antiquated in parts. Three volumes deal with the mediæval period:
- Oman, C. W. C. *The Dark Ages*.
- Tout, T. F. *The Empire and the Papacy*.
- Lodge, R. *The Close of the Middle Ages*.

## COLLECTIONS OF DOCUMENTS

- Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*. The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1897 f. Contains much valuable material; see references under separate chapters below.
- Henderson, E. F. *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*. London, 1896.
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- Scott, J. F., Hyma, A., and Noyes, A. H. *Readings in Medieval History*. New York, 1933. Contains extracts not only from mediæval sources, but also from modern authors.
- Duncalf, F., and Krey, A. C. *Parallel Source Problems in Mediæval History*. New York, 1912.
- Coulton, G. G. *A Medieval Garner*. London, 1910. A great variety of what the author calls Human Documents.

## COLLECTIONS OF SPECIAL ARTICLES

- Munro, D. C., and Sellery, G. C. *Medieval Civilization*. New York, 1904. Selections from the works of famous European historians.
- Crump, C. G., and Jacob, E. F. *The Legacy of the Middle Ages*. Oxford, 1926. Chapters by various authors on special phases of mediæval culture. Well illustrated.
- Hearnshaw, F. J. C. *Mediæval Contributions to Modern Civilization*. London, 1921. A book somewhat like that preceding.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Histoire du Moyen Age*. Vol. VIII: *La Civilisation Occidentale au Moyen Age*. Paris, 1933. The first part of this volume, by H. Pirenne, is the best concise sketch of mediæval economic



history that has appeared. It is soon to be published in English translation by Kegan Paul, London.

Thompson, J. W. *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*. New York, 1928.

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Gras, N. S. B. *An Introduction to Economic History*. New York, 1922.

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Knight, M. M., Barnes, H. E., and Flügel, F. *Economic History of Europe*. Boston, 1928. For other references, see the bibliography to this text.

#### INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Taylor, H. O. *The Mediæval Mind*. 2 vols. Fourth Edition. London, 1930. Deals with phases of religion, as well as education and letters; contains many analyses of mediæval writers.

de Wulf, M. *History of Mediæval Philosophy*. Translated from the French. 2 vols. London, 1925-26. A standard work on the subject.

Thorndike, L. *A History of Magic and Experimental Science during the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era*. 2 vols. New York, 1923.

——— The same: *Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. 2 vols. New York, 1934. Scholarly; for the advanced student rather than the beginner.

Sarton, G. *Introduction to the History of Science*. 2 vols. Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1927-31. An invaluable compilation of bibliographical materials, together with brief comments on the scientists of all countries, arranged chronologically. Excellent introductory notes to the various chapters.

Sedgwick, W. T., and Tyler, H. W. *A Short History of Science*. New York, 1929. Brief.

Dampier-Whetham, W. C. *A History of Science and Its Relations with Philosophy and Religion*. Cambridge, 1930. Also brief, despite the title.

Poole, R. L. *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning*. Second Edition. London, 1920. A famous book that deserves its reputation. Includes numerous quotations from mediæval works.

## THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE PAPACY

- Duchesne, L. *Early History of the Christian Church*. Translated from the French. 3 vols. New York, 1909-24. By a liberal Catholic scholar.
- Harnack, A. *Outlines of the History of Dogma*. Translated from the German. New York, 1909. By a famous Protestant scholar.
- Flick, A. C. *The Rise of the Mediæval Church*. New York, 1909. More in the nature of a college text; provided with a useful bibliography.
- Mann, H. K. *The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages*. 18 vols. London, 1902-32. A very detailed account.
- Barry, W. F. *The Papal Monarchy from St. Gregory the Great to Boniface VIII*. London, 1902. Very brief.
- Baldwin, S. *The Organization of Mediæval Christianity*. New York, 1929. A brief survey in the *Berkshire Studies in European History*. For many other titles see the attached bibliography.

## THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

- Bury, J. B. *History of the Later Roman Empire*. 2 vols. London, 1923. A splendid book by a great scholar. Does not deal with the period after Justinian.
- Diehl, C. *History of the Byzantine Empire*. Translated from the French. Princeton, 1925. Very brief.
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## GERMANY AND THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

- Henderson, E. F. *A Short History of Germany*. 2 vols. New Edition. New York, 1931.
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## FRANCE

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best history of France, to which many excellent scholars have contributed. Not translated.

Macdonald, J. R. M. *A History of France*. 3 vols. New York, 1915.

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Tilley, A. *Medieval France*. Cambridge, 1922. A series of brief chapters on all phases of French civilization in the Middle Ages, written by a number of good historians.

Funck-Brentano, F. *The Middle Ages*. Translated from the French. New York, 1926. A volume from the *National History of France*. Readable, but highly imaginative in spots. Good chapters on phases of French culture.

#### BELGIUM

Pirenne, H. *Histoire de Belgique*. Vols. I-II. Brussels, 1922-29. Especially fine on the mediæval period. Not translated.

——— *Belgian Democracy, Its Early History*. Translated from the French. Manchester, 1915. A series of lectures that briefly review some parts of the author's greater work.

#### ENGLAND

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#### SPAIN

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## SCANDINAVIA

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## SWITZERLAND

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## EASTERN EUROPE

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## THE BALKANS

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## CHAPTER I.—THE DECLINE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Of the innumerable volumes dealing with Rome, only one calls for special mention here, M. I. Rostovtzeff's *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1926)—a detailed treatment by a distinguished scholar of the fundamental problems that are lightly touched in the present chapter. An excellent introduction to the subject of the so-called fall of Rome is to be found in the *American Historical Review*, XX, 723 ff.: "The Economic Basis of the Decline of Ancient Culture," by W. L. Westermann. The most stimulating of briefer works on the history of the later empire and its barbarization is Ferdinand Lot's *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle Ages*, translated from the French (New York, 1931). It graphically treats all phases of the subject—politics, institutions, religion, literature, and the arts.

Much interesting detail concerning social conditions is presented in Samuel Dill's two volumes: *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (Second Edition; London, 1905) and *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (London, 1899). There are a number of fascinating books on the subject of religions; among them may be mentioned T. R. Glover's *Conflict of Religions in the Roman Empire* (London, 1909) and Franz Cumont's *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, translated from the French (Chicago, 1911). The best source on early Christianity is the New Testament, which should be read—if for no other reason—as part of a historical education. The ideas of the later Stoics may be readily learned from Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, available in many translations; and any one who desires a taste of Neo-Platonism can best secure it by dipping into the works of Plotinus, conveniently translated in the *Bohn Library*. On Galen and Ptolemy see the histories of science by Sarton and Thorndike; also the interesting chapters in C. J. Singer's *From Magic to Science* (New York, 1928).

## CHAPTER II.—THE OLD AND THE NEW IN MEDIÆVAL EUROPE

Bury's *History of the Later Roman Empire* contains a masterly sketch of late Roman institutions, as well as a clear narrative of political events. See also Lot's *End of the Ancient World* and the appropriate chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. I. J. B. Firth's *Constantine the Great* (New York, 1905) is a standard biography; but the best review of the emperor's religious policy is the brief study by N. H. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*, published by the British Academy (London, 1930).

Aside from the general works on church history listed above, see

H. B. Workman's *Persecution in the Early Church* (London, 1906). A good selection of documents on the persecutions and on the early councils will be found in the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, IV, nos. 1-2. E. R. Goodenough's *The Church in the Roman Empire* (New York, 1931) is a comprehensive little volume in the *Berkshire Studies in European History*, with a useful bibliographical note.

W. Z. Ripley's *Races of Europe* (New York, 1899) remains the most popular book on the subject. For a more recent discussion based upon an entirely different classification of peoples, see R. B. Dixon's *Racial History of Man* (New York, 1923). A splendid review of the question as it now stands before the scholarly world is given in *History*, XVIII (1933), by V. G. Childe.

The *Germania* of Tacitus, available in many translations, is the only good contemporary account of the early Germans that we have. The student might as well read the original as a commentary. By all odds the best description in English of the Asiatic nomads is that of T. Peisker in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, I. ch. xii.

#### CHAPTER III.—THE BARBARIZATION OF THE WEST

Besides giving full accounts of the invasions, Bury's *Later Roman Empire* and Lot's *End of the Ancient World* include much interesting discussion of their general nature and significance. For greater detail, see T. Hodgkin's *Italy and Her Invaders*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1892-96). The same author's *Theodoric the Goth* (New York, 1891) remains the standard biography of the foremost barbarian chieftain of the fifth century. Ammianus Marcellinus, the best Latin historian of the age, is translated in the *Bohn Library*.

For books on Gregory of Tours and Merovingian Gaul, see below under Chapter VII. The Salic Law is translated in Henderson's *Select Historical Documents*. With this may be compared the dooms of the Anglo-Saxon kings, conveniently edited and translated by F. L. Attenborough, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922). On the general subject of Germanic law, see E. Jenks, *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1898), and the classic work of H. C. Lea, *Superstition and Force* (Philadelphia, 1866). Portions of the Gothic Bible of Ulfilas, together with many other examples of early written German, may be seen in G. Konnecke and F. Behrend, *Bilderatlas zur Geschichte der deutschen Nationalliteratur* (Marburg, 1928).

On Theodosius see T. Hodgkin, *The Dynasty of Theodosius* (Oxford, 1889); on Julian the Apostate see the biographies by Alice Gardner (New York, 1895) and G. Negri, translated from the Italian, 2 vols. (New York, 1905).

## CHAPTER IV.—THE CHURCH IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

All the general books on the church deal with the organization of the episcopate and the emergence of the papacy. A good brief sketch of the subject from the Protestant point of view is given in S. Baldwin's *Organisation of Medieval Christianity*. The Catholic point of view can be readily gained from the articles in the Catholic Encyclopedia or from P. Batiffol's *Primitive Catholicism* (London, 1912). Many of the fundamental sources for the early history of the Roman church are translated in two volumes of the Columbia University *Records of Civilization*: Louise R. Loomis, *The Book of the Popes* (1916); the same writer in collaboration with J. T. Shotwell, *The See of St. Peter* (1927).

E. C. Butler's *Benedictine Monachism* (London, 1919) provides an admirable introduction to the subject, and the same author has contributed articles to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and to the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. I, where full bibliographies will be found. See also H. B. Workman's *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal* (London, 1913) and F. H. Dudden's *Gregory the Great* (New York, 1905), I, 160 f. The Rule of St. Benedict can be found in several translations. On its interpretation see especially John Chapman's *St. Benedict and the Sixth Century* (New York, 1929)—a book which has received too little attention from historians.

On education in the later Roman Empire, besides the relevant chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History* and H. O. Taylor's *Mediæval Mind*, see two admirable books that have been recently published: E. K. Rand, *Founders of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), and M. L. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe, A.D. 500 to 900* (London, 1931). There are numerous biographies of St. Augustine—among them those by J. McCabe (New York, 1903), W. Montgomery (London, 1914), and E. McDougall (New York, 1930). But all are largely based on the man's own *Confessions*, which the interested student will prefer to any secondary work. The *Confessions* and also the *Civitas Dei* are obtainable in a number of English versions. Selected letters of St. Jerome have been translated by F. A. Wright for the *Loeb Classical Library* (London, 1933).

## CHAPTER V.—THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Detailed treatment of Justinian's reign may be found in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, in Bury's *Later Roman Empire*, and in W. G. Holmes, *The Age of Justinian and Theodora*, 2 vols. (London, 1905-07). S. Runciman's *Byzantine Civilization* (London, 1933) is a particularly useful sketch of the subject for the student

who wants a brief summary. The *History of the Wars* by Procopius is translated by H. B. Dewing in the *Loeb Classical Library*, 5 vols. (London, 1914-28). On Persia see P. M. Sykes, *History of Persia*, 2 vols. (London, 1915); on the Avars and Slavs, T. Peisker's chapter in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II. H. J. Roby's chapter in the same volume gives a good introduction to the Roman law. For more detail see F. P. Walton's *Historical Introduction to the Roman Law* (Second Edition; Edinburgh, 1912). A famous classic on the subject is H. S. Maine's *Ancient Law*, edited by F. Pollock (London, 1930).

Any one of a dozen histories of architecture will provide a sketch of the Byzantine style with adequate illustrations. But the student is referred in particular to T. G. Jackson's *Byzantine and Romanesque Architecture* (Cambridge, 1913), vol. I, which contains splendid descriptions of all the important buildings and a wealth of drawings by the author. Here, too, may be seen reproductions of mosaic in color—the only way, short of actual observation, in which any idea of the original can be obtained.

#### CHAPTER VI.—THE ARAB EMPIRE

The chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. III, by A. A. Bevan and C. H. Becker provide as good a review of this subject as may be found anywhere; see also the latter author's *Christianity and Islam* (London, 1909). There are two good books by D. S. Margoliouth: *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (New York, 1905) and *The Early Development of Mohammedanism* (London, 1914). C. I. Huart's *History of Arabic Literature* (New York, 1903) may be referred to as giving the literary background for Mohammed's career. The best translation of the Koran is that of Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York, 1930); but S. Lane-Poole's *The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammed* (London, 1882) remains useful as a little volume of selections. On the civilization of the Arab Empire, see below under Chapter IX.

#### CHAPTER VII.—THE WEST AFTER JUSTINIAN

On Merovingian Gaul see Lot, *The End of the Ancient World*, pt. iii; C. Pfister's chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II; and S. Dill, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (London, 1926). The best source for the period is Gregory of Tours, whose *History of the Franks* has been translated and given a splendid introduction by O. M. Dalton (Oxford, 1927). Selections from the same work have been translated for the *Columbia University Records of Civilization* by E. Brehaut (1916).



On the Lombards the standard work, now somewhat out-of-date, is Hodgkin's *Italy and Her Invaders*, vols. V, VI. A translation of Paul the Deacon by W. D. Foulke has been published by the Department of History, U. of Pa. (1907).

F. H. Dudden's *Gregory the Great*, 2 vols. (New York, 1905), is a splendid biography. Gregory's *Pastoral Care* and *Letters* will be found translated in the collection of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. XII. His *Dialogues* are separately translated in a new edition by E. G. Gardner (London, 1911).

Aside from the chapters and articles in more general works, the following books may be noted in connection with the spread of Christianity: T. S. Holmes, *The Origin and Development of the Church in Gaul* (London, 1911); A. Plummer, *The Churches in Britain before 1000* (London, 1911); H. Zimmer, *The Celtic Church in Britain and Ireland*, translated from the German (London, 1902). On St. Boniface see G. F. Browne, *Boniface of Crediton* (London, 1910); also Willibald's *Life of St. Boniface*, translated by G. W. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass., 1916). The very interesting *Life of St. Columban*, by the monk Jonas, is translated in the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, II, no. 7.

#### CHAPTER VIII.—THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

The best review in English of the Carolingian Empire and its institutions is that of G. Seeliger in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, II, chs. xix, xxi. There are two standard biographies of Charlemagne, by T. Hodgkin (London, 1897) and H. W. C. Davis (New York, 1900). The great classic, however, is Einhard's *Life*, which has been translated a number of times. Some of the emperor's capitularies are in the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, III, no. 2, and VI, no. 5. On the imperial coronation of 800 see Duncalf and Krey, *Parallel Source Problems*.

#### CHAPTER IX.—LIGHT IN THE DARK AGE

*The Legacy of Islam*, edited by T. W. Arnold and A. Guillaume (Oxford, 1931), gives a splendid survey of Moslem civilization and indicates further readings in connection with its various chapters. See also the histories of science noted above, particularly Sarton's introductory chapters. Among more special works may be mentioned: J. L. E. Dreyer, *History of the Planetary Systems from Thales to Kepler* (Cambridge, 1906); M. Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, translated from the German, vol. I (London, 1910); F. Cajori, *History of Mathematics* (New York, 1919); D. E. Smith, *History of Mathematics* (Boston, 1923). The Moslem culture of

Spain is fully discussed in S. Lane-Poole's *The Story of the Moors in Spain* (New York, 1886).

The best book on Latin education and learning during this age is M. L. W. Laistner's *Thought and Letters in Western Europe, A.D. 500 to 900* (London, 1931), which includes a full bibliography. See also H. O. Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind*, chs. x, xi, and C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), introductory chapters.

E. Brehaut's *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages* (New York, 1912) is a particularly interesting book on Isidore of Seville. The more important works of Bede are available in several translations. E. A. Lowe's chapter in *The Legacy of the Middle Ages* sketches concisely the difficult subject of mediæval handwriting. W. P. Ker's *The Dark Ages* (New York, 1904) gives a good introduction to the vernacular languages of western Europe.

#### CHAPTER X.—POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION

There are many recent and interesting books on the vikings. Especially noteworthy is T. D. Kendrick's *History of the Vikings* (New York, 1930). See also A. Mawer, *The Vikings* (Cambridge, 1913); A. Olrik, *Viking Civilisation* (New York, 1930); Mary W. Williams, *Social Scandinavia in the Viking Age* (New York, 1920); F. Nansen, *In Northern Mists*, translated from the Norse, 2 vols. (New York, 1911). References on the sagas are given below, p. 759.

On the formation of the various new European states, see the books listed above, pp. 749 f. The chapters by W. J. Corbett on England and by L. Halphen on France in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. II, III, are of outstanding excellence. On Alfred see C. Plummer's *The Life and Times of Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1902). A translation of the contemporary work by Asser is to be found in J. A. Giles, *Six Old English Chronicles* (London, 1875). Parts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* give a vivid account of the Danish wars and other political events of the tenth century; there are a number of translations. The dooms of Alfred and his successors may be read in the edition of Attenborough (above, p. 753). Portions of various other chronicles are given in the source books listed at the beginning of these notes.

#### CHAPTER XI.—FEUDAL SOCIETY

Despite all that has been written on feudal society, it is almost impossible to refer to any clear and authoritative accounts, either of feudalism or of the manorial system in the early Middle Ages. Authors have generally treated the life of the nobility and the peasantry as having been static throughout the entire period, whereas

conditions changed enormously between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. Marc Bloch's article on feudalism in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* is clear, though necessarily brief. The introduction to the subject by G. B. Adams in his *Civilization during the Middle Ages* remains fundamentally sound, but should be compared with the same author's remarks in *The Origin of the English Constitution* (New Haven, 1912), pp. 186 f. See also C. Seignobos, *The Feudal Régime*, translated from the French (New York, 1902); J. W. Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*, chs. xxv-xxvii. A. Luchaire's *Social France in the Time of Philip Augustus*, translated from the French (New York, 1912), contains much interesting detail and, in spite of the title, does not reflect solely the life of the later age.

The popular books on chivalry, such as that of Gautier, are in general worthless for the age when society was thoroughly feudal. The best source on primitive chivalry is the *Song of Roland*, discussed in the following chapter. There is a good selection of documents in the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, IV, no. 3. Many others are available in translation, but they normally cannot be understood without specialized study. The Bayeux Tapestry has been reproduced many times—excellently in H. Belloc's *Book of the Bayeux Tapestry* (London, 1914), though the comments are not always reliable.

A wealth of material exists in English on the manorial system of England. See the economic histories listed above, pp. 747 f., and Mary Bateson's *Mediæval England*. There are numerous collections of manorial documents in translation (e.g., the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, III, no. 5), but they usually require expert interpretation. It is too bad that we do not have more such realistic sketches as Eileen Power's *Medieval People* (London, 1924), ch. i. See also her chapter in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. VII.

## CHAPTER XII.—FEUDAL STATES AND ADVENTURERS

Besides the books on England and France already mentioned, see L. M. Larson's *Canute the Great* (New York, 1912) and F. M. Stenton's *William the Conqueror* (New York, 1908). The splendid book of C. H. Haskins, *The Normans in European History* (Boston, 1915), should be read by every student of the period. It deals with the Normans in Normandy, England, Italy, and Sicily. The effect of the Norman Conquest upon English institutions may be studied in a number of admirable books—among them G. B. Adams, *Constitutional History of England* (New York, 1921); A. B. White, *The Making of the English Constitution* (Second Edition; New York,

1925); and W. A. Morris, *The Constitutional History of England to 1216* (New York, 1930).

A good introduction to the rich literature of the sagas is given by two recent books: W. A. Craigie, *The Icelandic Sagas* (Cambridge, 1913), and Bertha S. Phillpotts, *Edda and Saga* (London, 1931). The sagas themselves are available in many translations, including volumes of the *Everyman Library*.

For all phases of early English literature, see the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1932). Beowulf has been admirably put into modern English by C. K. Scott-Moncrieff (London, 1921). The best books on French literature are not translated. There is, however, an excellent brief sketch by G. Paris, *Mediaeval French Literature* (London, 1903). See also the appropriate chapters in A. Tilley's *Medieval France*. The *Song of Roland* can be read in many translations, of which that by Scott-Moncrieff (above, p. 292) is especially recommended. On the earliest monuments of German literature see K. Francke, *A History of German Literature* (Fourth Edition; New York, 1913).

#### CHAPTER XIII.—THE EMPIRE AND THE PAPACY

There are detailed chapters on the empire and the papacy in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. III, V. In addition to the other general books already cited, see A. H. Mathew's *Life and Times of Hildebrand* (London, 1910) and J. W. Thompson's *Feudal Germany* (Chicago, 1928), which is particularly good on the German eastward expansion. Invaluable source material is provided by the *Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII*, translated by E. Emerton for the Columbia U. *Records of Civilization* (1932). See also Duncalf and Krey, *Parallel Source Problems*. C. W. Previté-Orton's chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. III, V, give the best survey in English of Italy in the tenth and eleventh centuries. On theories of church and state in the Middle Ages, C. W. McIlwain's *Growth of Political Thought* (New York, 1932) is to be preferred to any of the older accounts.

#### CHAPTER XIV.—THE CRUSADE

R. A. Newhall's little volume in the *Berkshire Studies in European History* (New York, 1927) gives a brief account of the whole crusading movement in relation to events both in the east and in the west. Among the longer books on the crusades, or on some phase of them, may be mentioned: E. Barker, *The Crusades* (London, 1923); W. B. Stevenson, *The Crusaders in the East* (Cambridge, 1907); C. W. David, *Robert Curthose* (Cambridge, Mass., 1920); R. B. Yewdale, *Bohemond I, Prince of Antioch* (Princeton, 1924);

J. L. LaMonte, *Feudal Monarchy in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932). Supplementary reading of great interest is provided by the letters of the crusaders and other source material published in the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, I, nos. 2, 4, and in A. C. Krey's *First Crusade* (Princeton, 1921). For additional titles, see Newhall's bibliography.

The *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, gives full treatment to all the eastern aspects of the crusade; the western aspects are clearly discussed by W. B. Stevenson in vol. V. Of many books that deal with the Greek church, two may be mentioned here: A. H. Hore, *Eighteen Centuries of the Orthodox Greek Church* (London, 1899), and W. F. Adeney, *The Greek and Eastern Churches* (New York, 1908).

#### CHAPTER XV.—THE GROWTH OF THE TOWNS

By all odds the best book on the revival of commerce and urban life is H. Pirenne's *Medieval Cities*, translated from the French (Princeton, 1925). See also the same author's chapter in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. VI. The best sketch in English of the early Italian communes is that of C. W. Previté-Orton, in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. V. For histories of separate Italian cities, see below, p. 765. C. Stephenson's *Borough and Town* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933) is in the main a technical study, but reviews some typical urban liberties on the continent. There are almost no illustrative documents available in translation; see the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, II, no. 1.

Many books dealing with commerce are listed above, p. 748. One wishes there were more such studies as E. H. Byrne's *Genoese Shipping* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930).

#### CHAPTER XVI.—FRANCE AND ENGLAND: THE RISE OF THE CAPETIANS

The appropriate chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. V, VI, give an excellent review of English and French political history in the twelfth century, and each is accompanied by a good bibliography. For books on the English constitution, see above under Chapter XII; and for a more extended list of readings see Lunt's *History of England*, notes to chs. v-vii. There are histories of Scotland by P. H. Brown (Cambridge, 1899), A. Lang (Edinburgh, 1900-07), and C. S. Terry (Cambridge, 1920); of Ireland by P. W. Joyce (London, 1924) and R. Dunlop (Oxford, 1922); of Wales by J. E. Lloyd (London, 1912), also J. Rhys and D. B. Jones (London, 1900).

### CHAPTER XVII.—ITALY AND GERMANY: THE TRIUMPH OF THE PAPACY

Detailed chapters on the political history of Germany and Italy will be found in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vols. V, VI. H. W. Jacob's chapter in the latter volume gives a particularly good introduction to the pontificate of Innocent III. See also, in addition to the general histories of the papacy and the church, the little book of S. R. Packard, *Europe and the Church under Innocent III* (New York, 1927), which includes a useful bibliography.

The best sketch of the Normans in Italy and Sicily is that of C. H. Haskins in his *Normans in European History*. On the eastward expansion of the Germans, see J. W. Thompson's *Feudal Germany*. There is no good biography of Frederick Barbarossa in English; there is one of Henry the Lion by A. L. Poole (Oxford, 1912). For a fine example of German historiography see the chronicle of Otto, bishop of Freising, translated in the Columbia U. *Records of Civilization* by C. C. Mierow (1928).

### CHAPTER XVIII.—INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The best survey of this whole subject is provided by C. H. Haskins in his *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927). Particular aspects of contemporary science and philosophy are treated in the general books by Taylor, Thorndike, Sarton, and de Wulf (above, p. 748). See also the appropriate chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. V, in *The Legacy of the Middle Ages*, and in A. Tilley's *Medieval France*.

There are numerous books on Abélard—among them the biographies by J. McCabe (New York, 1901) and Helen Waddell (London, 1933). But the best introduction to the tragic story of Abélard and Héloïse is unquestionably their own letters; see the edition by Scott-Moncrieff noted above, p. 421. The student is warned against older alleged translations, which are largely falsifications. R. L. Poole's *Illustrations of Mediæval Thought* contains interesting chapters, with many quotations from original sources, on Abélard, John of Salisbury, Hugh of St. Victor, and other writers of the twelfth century.

On the revival of legal study, see the *Cambridge Medieval History*, V, ch. xxi; P. Vinogradoff, *Roman Law in Mediæval Europe* (London, 1909); F. Pollock and F. W. Maitland, *History of English Law* (Second Edition; Cambridge, 1898), I, pt. i; O. J. Reichel, *The Elements of Canon Law* (London, 1890); *The Legacy of the Middle Ages*, ch. vi.

A wealth of interesting material exists on the mediæval universi-

ties. Besides what is given in the books mentioned above, see the following excellent works: H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1895); C. H. Haskins, *The Rise of Universities* (New York, 1923). The latter scholar edited a number of student letters in the *American Historical Review*, III, 223 ff.; they are reprinted in his *Studies in Mediæval Culture* (Oxford, 1929).

#### CHAPTER XIX.—DEVELOPMENTS IN LITERATURE

The best review of Latin literature in the twelfth century is that of Haskins in his *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, where reference is made to many other works on the subject. On the Goliardi see especially Helen Waddell's *Wandering Scholars* (London, 1927) and her charming translations in *Medieval Latin Lyrics* (London, 1932), some of which have been quoted in the text. *Wine, Women, and Song*, by J. A. Symonds (London, 1884) is an older collection of the same sort.

For the *Song of Roland* and books on French literature, see above under Chapter XII. There are numerous works on the troubadours and their music; see particularly P. Aubry, *Trouvères and Troubadours*, translated from the French (New York, 1914); H. A. Dickinson, *Troubadour Songs* (New York, 1920); and H. J. Chaytor, *The Troubadours* (Cambridge, 1912). Excellent translations of the northern French lyrics will be found in the book of C. C. Abbott referred to above, p. 457. A good introduction to the subject of mediæval music is provided by R. T. White's *Music and Its Story* (Cambridge, 1924). And see J. W. Thompson's interesting chapter in his *Middle Ages*, vol. II.

The romances of Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes, and others are available in many translations, including several convenient volumes in the *Everyman Library*. The *Romance of Reynard* can likewise be had in a number of versions. The best translation of *Aucassin et Nicolette* is that of Andrew Lang.

The *Poema del Cid* has been put into English verse by A. M. Huntingdon (Hispanic Society of America, 1921); also by R. S. Rose and L. Bacon (U. of California Press, 1919). The existing translations of Walther von der Vogelweide are not remarkable as poetry, but give some idea of the author's thought. See, for example, W. A. Phillips, *Selected Poems of Walther von der Vogelweide* (London, 1896). The *Nibelungenlied* can be read in numerous translations, both prose and verse.

#### CHAPTER XX.—DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FINE ARTS

There are dozens of good books on mediæval architecture. Especially fine are T. G. Jackson's *Byzantine and Romanesque Architec-*

ture, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1913), and *Gothic Architecture*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1915). The same author has also an excellent chapter in Tilley's *Medieval France*. Two books that should be read by every one who has a real interest in the Middle Ages are *Religious Art in France, Thirteenth Century*, by E. Mâle (London, 1913), and *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, by Henry Adams (Washington, 1904). The former is one of a series by a brilliant French writer, who explains the symbolic character of ecclesiastical art in the Middle Ages. The latter, by a famous American scholar, deals not only with architecture, but with the arts generally and their interrelation.

The only way to gain any understanding or appreciation of mediæval art is to study either the originals or good reproductions. Instead of merely reading about statues and carvings, look at a set of photographs. On the subject of the decorative arts there are good chapters in Tilley's *Medieval France* and in *The Legacy of the Middle Ages*. Sculpture is particularly dealt with in the very handsome volumes of P. Deschamps, M. Aubert, P. Vitry, and others, recently published in English by the Pantheon Press, Paris. See also A. Gardner, *Medieval Sculpture in France* (Cambridge, 1931). Among many works on stained glass mention may be made of L. F. Day's *Windows* (Third Edition; London, 1909) and H. Arnold's *Stained Glass of the Middle Ages in England and France* (London, 1913). For reproductions in color, see *Les Vitraux de la Cathédrale de Chartres* (Chartres, 1926). There is a good book on the *Architect in History* by M. S. Briggs (Oxford, 1927).

#### CHAPTER XXI.—THE HEIGHT OF THE CHURCH: SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Volume VI of the *Cambridge Medieval History* gives detailed treatment to almost all the topics considered in this chapter. For economic history and the towns, see the books referred to above, pp. 747 f. Much interesting material will be found also in the two little volumes of L. F. Salzman: *English Industries in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1923) and *English Trade in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1931). An excellent introduction to the Jews and their contributions to culture is given in *The Legacy of Israel*, by I. Abrahams and others (Oxford, 1927). For additional detail see A. L. Sachar, *History of the Jews* (New York, 1932); G. F. Abbott, *Israel in Europe* (London, 1907); A. M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (London, 1928); and J. Jacobs, *The Jews of Angevin England* (London, 1928).

There are practically no special works in English on the heresies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; see the few relevant docu-



ments in the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, III, no. 6. H. C. Lea's famous book has inspired many replies from Catholic writers. Of them the best is the scholarly work of E. Vacandard, translated from the French (New York, 1908). See also the volumes on the same subject by G. G. Coulton (London, 1929) and A. Maycock (New York, 1927).

The writings of St. Francis have been translated by P. Robinson (Philadelphia, 1906); Thomas of Celano's *Lives* by A. G. F. Howell (London, 1908); Bonaventura by E. G. Salter (London, 1904); Salimbene by G. G. Coulton, under the title *From St. Francis to Dante* (London, 1906). For a critical estimate of the relevant sources, see F. C. Burkitt's chapter in *Franciscan Essays*, II (Manchester, 1932). The famous biography by P. Sabatier (New York, 1928) should be supplemented by more recent estimates; see particularly A. G. Little's chapter in the *Cambridge Medieval History* and his other writings on the subject. The material in English on the Dominicans is not so plentiful; see G. R. Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order* (Manchester, 1925) and B. E. R. Formoy, *The Dominican Order in England* (London, 1925).

Aside from the general books on mediæval thought and on the universities, there is an extensive literature on individual scholastics. For example, the student is referred to E. H. Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, translated from the French (Cambridge, 1924); M. Grabmann, *Thomas Aquinas*, translated from the German (New York, 1928); and M. C. D'Arcy, *Thomas Aquinas* (London, 1930). Roger Bacon's *Opus Maius* has been translated by R. V. Burke for the U. of Pa. Press, 1928. The interesting story of the alleged cipher of Roger Bacon will be found in W. R. N. Newbold's book on that subject (U. of Pa. Press, 1928)—on which see the articles of L. Thorndike (*Am. Hist. Rev.*, XXI, 237 ff., 468 ff.) and J. M. Manley (*Speculum*, VI, 345 ff.). See also A. G. Little's *Roger Bacon Essays* (Oxford, 1914) and F. S. Stevenson's *Robert Grosseteste* (London, 1899).

## CHAPTER XXII.—THE HEIGHT OF THE CHURCH: POLITICS

On the later crusades see the books referred to above under Chapter XIV; also the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, and S. Lane-Poole, *Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (New York, 1898). The memoirs of Villehardouin are conveniently translated in the *Everyman Library*.

The most recent work in English on Frederick II is that of E. Kantorowicz, translated from the German (London, 1931). The importance of the emperor in the history of culture is more clearly brought out in various articles by C. H. Haskins, collected in his

*Studies in the History of Mediæval Science* (Cambridge, Mass., 1924). See also his *Normans in European History*, ch. viii.

For works on the political history of the various European countries, see the list at the beginning of these notes. The following books deal with particular Italian cities: H. F. Brown, *Studies in the History of Venice* (London, 1907); W. C. Hazlitt, *The Venetian Republic*, 2 vols. (London, 1915); F. Schevill, *Siena* (New York, 1909); W. Heywood, *A History of Pisa* (Cambridge, 1920); E. G. Gardner, *The Story of Florence* (London, 1900); F. A. Hyett, *Florence* (London, 1903).

#### CHAPTER XXIII.—THE EMERGENCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

Aside from the chapters in the *Cambridge Medieval History* and the general works already referred to, there is little to mention in the present connection. On St. Louis and his crusade the one work that should be read by everybody is that of Joinville, which can be found in several translations. It is included with the memoirs of Villehardouin in a volume of the *Everyman Library*.

There are lives of Edward I by T. F. Tout (London, 1906) and E. Jenks (New York, 1902). Of the many excellent books on particular phases of English constitutional history, few can be understood by one who has not made a preliminary study of the whole subject. See the bibliographies attached to Lunt's *History of England*, chs. xi, xii.

The bulls of Boniface VIII can be found in many collections of sources. There is a recent life of that interesting pope by T. S. R. Boase (London, 1933).

#### CHAPTER XXIV.—CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

The *Cambridge Medieval History* contains good discussions of most subjects treated in this chapter—especially Germany, Bohemia, the Swiss, the Hansa, and the Teutonic Knights. The Ottoman Turks and the Balkans are dealt with in vol. IV. The great standard work on the Mongols is the history by H. H. Howorth in four volumes (London, 1876-1927). More popular accounts will be found in J. Curtin's *The Mongols* (Boston, 1908) and *The Mongols in Russia* (Boston, 1908). A recent book on Jenghis Khan is the biography by B. Y. Vladimirtsov, translated from the Russian (London, 1930). Marco Polo's *Travels* are justly famous and may be read in many editions, the most scholarly of which is Yule's (Third Edition; London, 1903). On the Ottoman Turks see H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1916).

Elizabeth G. Nash has published a popular account of the Hansa (London, 1929). There is no special work in English on the Teutonic Knights. On that subject the student is referred to general histories of Germany.

#### CHAPTER XXV.—THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

There is little in English on the history of France in the fourteenth century beyond chapters in general books. Within its limitations (see Chapter XXVI), Froissart's *Chronicle* is an excellent source for certain phases of the war. It can be read in various translations, either in full or in a condensed edition, such as that in the *Everyman Library*. Among the characters of the early fifteenth century, Jeanne d'Arc has long been the favorite with biographers. The life of the Maid has been well told by F. C. Lowell (Boston, 1896) and by Andrew Lang (London, 1909). The latter book is particularly interesting as an effective rejoinder to the unsympathetic biography by Anatole France. The fundamental source for the character and career of Jeanne is the record of her trial, which has been translated by T. Douglas Murray under the title, *Jeanne d'Arc* (New York, 1902). It cannot be recommended too highly to any one who wants to learn of the famous girl from her own words.

Fourteenth-century England has been made the subject of countless books, many of them inspired by the writings of Chaucer, Langland, and Wycliffe (see under Chapters XXVII and XXVIII). Two delightful books dealing with general conditions in the kingdom are G. M. Trevelyan's *England in the Age of Wycliffe* (London, 1909) and J. J. Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages* (London, 1889). There is an extensive literature on the Black Death, including special works on the subject by C. Creighton (Cambridge, 1891-94) and F. A. Gasquet (London, 1908). For a more critical estimate of its economic significance, see C. Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History*, vol. II (Manchester, 1914). This same volume includes the best survey of the Great Revolt of 1381. For many additional references on these and other topics, see Lunt's *History of England*, bibliographical notes to chs. xii-xiv.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.—WESTERN EUROPE IN THE LATER FIFTEENTH CENTURY

On the economic and social changes of this period see the general works listed above, pp. 749 f.; on the Italian cities see the books mentioned under Chapter XXII; for readings on the Tudor accession, see Lunt's *History of England*, bibliographical notes to chs. xv, xvi. The following books may be consulted on the subject of

warfare in the Middle Ages: C. W. C. Oman, *The Art of War in the Middle Ages* (New and Enlarged Edition; London, 1924); C. H. Ashdown, *Armour and Weapons in the Middle Ages* (London, 1925); O. L. Spaulding, H. Nickerson, and J. W. Wright, *Warfare* (New York, 1925); *Cambridge Medieval History*, VI, chs. xxii, xxiii.

On the history of Burgundy see Ruth Putnam's *Charles the Bold* (New York, 1908) and Otto Cartellieri's *Court of Burgundy*, translated from the German (New York, 1929). There is nothing very good on Louis XI in English, except the *Memoirs* of Commynes, which are translated in the *Bohn Library*.

Those who wish to continue the study of geographical discovery should consult books dealing with the later period—as a beginning, the *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1903), and G. R. Beazley's *Dawn of Modern Geography*, 3 vols. (London, 1897-1906).

#### CHAPTER XXVII.—THE DECLINE OF THE CHURCH

In addition to the general works on the church that have already been listed, the following more special studies may be cited: H. Bruce, *The Age of Schism* (New York, 1907); L. Salembier, *The Great Schism of the West* (London, 1907); J. H. Wylie, *The Council of Constance* (London, 1900); H. B. Workman, *The Dawn of the Reformation* (London, 1901-02).

The best book on the ideas of Ockham, Marsiglio, and other writers of the age is C. H. McIlwain's *Growth of Political Thought* (New York, 1932). See also D. S. Muzzey, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (New York, 1907), and J. N. Figgis, *Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius* (Second Edition; Cambridge, 1923). Marsiglio's *Defensor Pacis* has been analyzed and in part translated by E. Emerton (Cambridge, Mass., 1920).

The literature on Wycliffe and Hus is vast in scope. Virtually all the works by the former, and some of those by the latter, can readily be obtained in English. The following list may be taken to include only a few of the standard books dealing with the two men: H. B. Workman, *John Wyclif* (Oxford, 1926); G. V. Lechler, *John Wycliffe and His English Precursors*, translated from the German (London, 1884); J. Loserth, *Wiclif and Hus*, translated from the German (London, 1884); Graf von Lützw, *The Life and Times of Master John Hus* (London, 1909); D. S. Schaff, *John Hus* (New York, 1915).

Many of the fourteenth-century mystics can be studied from their own writings—for example, the works of Richard Rolle and Juliana of Norwich in England. See also E. G. Gardner, *St. Catherine of Siena* (London, 1907) and V. D. Scudder, *St. Catherine as Seen in*

*Her Letters* (London, 1905). The mystics of the Low Countries are especially dealt with by A. Hyma in his *Christian Renaissance* (Grand Rapids, 1924).

A scholarly history of witchcraft in English remains to be written, but an introduction to the subject may be gained from the scattered contributions of G. L. Burr. See his survey in the *Papers of the American Historical Association*, vol. IV; and his collection of documents in the U. of Pa. *Translations and Reprints*, III, no. 4. The *Malleus Maleficarum* has been translated and edited with an amazing introduction by Montague Summers (London, 1928).

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE ADVANCE OF SECULAR CULTURE

The best introduction to the study of Dante is the work of K. Vossler, recently translated from the German under the title, *Mediæval Culture*, 2 vols. (London, 1929). Other books on every phase of the great poet's work may be found in almost unlimited quantity. There are also any number of translations of the *Divine Comedy*; the best of those in prose is unquestionably that of C. E. Norton, whose English version of the *Vita Nuova* is likewise famous. The *Convivio* may be had in translation by W. W. Jackson (Oxford, 1909); the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* in translation by A. G. F. Howell (London, 1890). The *De Monarchia* is translated in a number of editions.

Aside from the translations noted above, pp. 692 f., see on Petrarch the splendid work by P. Nolhac, only part of which is translated under the title, *Petrarch and the Ancient World* (Boston, 1907). For Petrarch's letters, together with an excellent study of the man's significance in history, see J. H. Robinson and H. W. Rolfe, *Petrarch* (Second Edition; New York, 1914). The first edition of this book should not be used, for the authors withdrew many of the opinions which are there expressed. On Boccaccio see particularly the interesting volume by E. Hutton (London, 1910).

The subject of Chaucer is too familiar to demand a bibliography here. The most usable version of *Piers Plowman* is that of Skeat (see above, p. 698); and for a discussion of the authors, see Manley's chapter in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. II. Besides the translations of Villon noted above (pp. 706 f.), there are a number of others. The best life of the poet is that by P. H. Champion (Paris, 1913), which is not translated; but D. B. Wyndham Lewis's biography (London, 1928) is an admirable study.

The famous work of J. A. Symonds on the *Renaissance in Italy* is now entirely out-of-date; but the first part should be read by the interested student merely to see how ideas have changed in the last half-century. Humanism and its results are no more than touched

in the present chapter. For recommended readings on that subject, see special books on the Renaissance, such as the recent volume by H. S. Lucas in this same historical series. Printing and allied subjects are dealt with in the following works: G. H. Putnam, *Books and Their Makers During the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (New York, 1896-97); T. F. Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward* (New York, 1925); R. A. Peddie, *Printing: A Short History of the Art* (London, 1927).

J. Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London, 1924) is a fascinating book on the culture of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For an introduction to the extensive literature on Renaissance art, see Lucas, *The Renaissance and the Reformation*, pp. 727 f.

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(NOTE: As a matter of convenience, Roman emperors in the east after Justinian are called Byzantine emperors; kings of the West Franks after 843 are called kings of France; kings of the East Franks after 843 are called kings of Germany.)

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